

# The Modern Language Journal

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# The Modern Language Journal

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# The Modern Language Journal

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## CLUB AND EXTRA-CLASS ACTIVITIES

By R. P. JAMESON

SOME may think that extra-class activities are superfluous, since it hardly seems possible properly to accomplish all the duties which are attached to the regular class work. Did anyone of you ever feel that he had exhausted all of the possibilities of the class period? Perhaps you have, but it happens oftener that the teacher is exhausted before the possibilities are. If we feel our responsibility for the best kind of teaching, we are keenly on the lookout for means of increasing the effectiveness of the class hour. We study the literature of methods, we weigh the arguments of the advocates of various kinds of procedure, we catch the enthusiasm of someone who thinks that he has a new idea and we pile up the various ways of occupying the time and attention of the pupils, so that not a single minute nor a single opportunity of impressing the lesson may be lost.

Are we in danger of following rather the Martha than the Mary method of teaching? Everything which diminishes loss of time, and helps us to go more surely and quickly to our goal is to be applauded and adopted. That does not mean, however, that a multiplicity of exercises, a breathless speed of presentation, a lengthy list of prescriptions for the pupil, a vast number of pages read over, will of necessity accomplish our object in language instruction. These things may lead on the contrary to confusion, blurring of impressions, jumbling of ideas, and distaste for the subject. On the other hand, slow and badly planned teaching

means waste and discouragement no less. It is to avoid the pitfalls on either side of the path that we must strive. No matter what method we may follow, it is indispensable that the greatest possible amount of interest on the part of the pupil should be aroused and maintained, so that toil over details, rules, exercises, may be cheerfully borne.

The question of making the work attractive to the pupil is bound up with the broader question of how to maintain interest in the study of the respective languages not only on the part of the students, but also on the part of those who direct educational policies, and upon the part of the public generally. I feel sure that judicious use of some extra-class activities may produce a very helpful effect in all of these directions. I have dealt with this point at greater length than I now may in an article on "Le Cercle Français" published in the *Modern Language Journal* of April, 1918.<sup>1</sup> There is an article on the German Club by Caroline M. Young in the same periodical, Volume I, pages 202-214. There are many useful suggestions in a little book entitled "Suggestions and References for Modern Language Teachers" edited by Professor Oliver of the University of Illinois, and published by the University of Illinois, School of Education, as its Bulletin No. 18. There is a good outline of parliamentary phrases for a Spanish Club in a book by Ruth Henry entitled "Easy Spanish Plays," published by Allyn & Bacon of Chicago. Add to these sources an article by Faith H. Dodge on French Clubs in Colleges and Universities published in the *Compte-rendu du Congrès de Langues et de Littérature française*, pages 90-96, and you have certainly most of the studies which are easily available.

Thus, tho' there is abundance of literature upon the technique of teaching, there is comparatively little upon the material which may occasionally be employed with great profit in the class and outside of it to present some attractive aspect of the subject, and stimulate a desire for better acquaintance. This article will offer suggestions as to different kinds of work that may be undertaken, indicate the collections of French popular songs which are avail-

<sup>1</sup> Similar opinions may be found in an address by Professor Bédier reported in the *Compte-rendu* mentioned above, in Miss Dodge's article, and in the addresses of different "conférenciers" published in the *Bulletin* of the *Alliance Française*.



able in this country, and give a brief description of several useful games.<sup>2</sup>

It seems to me axiomatic that in undertaking extra-class activities we should adopt the principle of associated effort. A group of students who have special interest or special ability may be easily constituted; and it then forms the natural center for the development of any one of the different forms of activity. This group will attract new members as its work is carried on successfully, and will make easy the formation of groups for the cultivation of other lines of activity, if such are desired.

I might join to this another axiom that the use of foreign language should be prescribed and the rule should be suspended only in cases of special necessity.

Another point which seems beyond dispute is that those who undertake to found clubs should profit by whatever experience and suggestions the great association of French clubs and societies may be able to offer. This association is called *l'Alliance Française*, and its head-quarters are at 200 Fifth Avenue, New York City. The newly-appointed Secretary, Monsieur Félix Weill, will be very glad to co-operate in the establishment of new clubs.<sup>3</sup> I do not know of a corresponding organization for Spanish.

As soon as possible the organization of the group should be accomplished by drawing up a constitution and by-laws or at least by electing a carefully chosen set of officers, and appointing the necessary committees. The organizer of the group should try to make a definite assignment of work to each of the officers. It would seem to be desirable that the group should itself vote upon the dues to be paid and that the treasurer should be a persistent individual who would see that the dues are collected. The accumulation of funds in the Club treasury is of the greatest importance.

The initiative in such matters will naturally be with the teacher, but unless one is very unfortunate in his classes, there

<sup>2</sup> The writer will be glad to receive criticisms and suggestions. The exchange of ideas is the way to put at the disposal of those interested the largest possible amount of information and material.

<sup>3</sup> The writer has published a booklet entitled "*Le Cercle Français*", which contains various aids for those conducting French clubs. Sent postpaid on receipt of 25 cents.

will always be some students to whom more or less of the organization work may be delegated; and they will usually gladly assume much responsibility for the conduct of the study and the entertainments which may be projected.

If the group is left too much to itself, however, our experience is that, as the school year goes on and brings many conflicting and competing attractions, attendance and interest on the part of even the best-intentioned of students is very apt to wane, because they feel that they have not time for everything, and discontinue those things which make the least appeal. We must therefore see to it that the work of the group or Club is attractive enough to hold its own, if possible, and I do not see how this can be assured unless the teacher will spend some thought and time and personal effort in holding things together. The best way to do this is, of course, to make the pupils feel that they are getting something which they cannot afford to miss; and to insure that the friendliness and sociability of the group is such that the members simply will not want to lose the chance to get together.

The question of a name is perhaps of secondary importance. But why not choose a name that shall show the very nature of the work, and naturally suggest the use of the foreign language, such for example, as "Cercle Français," "Club Français," "Alliance Française," "Amis du français," "Foyer francophile," "Club d'études françaises," "Union fraternelle," "Cénacle," "Société des amis de France," "La Bonne Compagnie," "L'Atelier des joyeux devis," "Club Daudet," using perhaps the name of the author who is most popular with the students? A "Club Labiche" ought to be successful.

For the Spanish, I would suggest "Sociedad hispana," "Club literario y recreativo," "Asociación de la Amistad," "La Amistad hispana," "Grupo literario y artistico," "Cenáculo literario," "Academia hispana," "Centro recreativo," "El Parnaso ibérico."

Whatever name may be taken, it is very important to tie up the work of the Club to some definite plan or purpose, for the reasons which I have already indicated. A limited field well covered is more satisfactory than an aimless roaming over all sorts of subjects, tho', of course, variety must be furnished.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Ample information about what other clubs are doing may be obtained from the Official Bulletin of the Alliance Française, published annually and to be obtained from the General Secretary, 200 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Some of the various lines of work which have been used with success in many places are: first, The reading of some popular book, either classic or modern. Ideally, the reading should be done outside the assembly hour, so as to furnish a basis for the group discussion. This will not usually be very carefully done, if indeed it be done at all. It is probably more satisfactory to assign in turn to the different members of the group definite passages to be read aloud in the foreign language. The one who reads should prepare to answer in French or Spanish as the case may be, questions about the text, explain difficult phrases, etc. Concert reading may also be used. The entire passage may then be discussed by the group under the direction of the leader, with a view to bringing out literary values. Contributions by the different members of the group may take the form of items about the author's life, his other works, study of the relation of the writer to some group or movement, opinions of the critics about his qualities or faults, explanation of historical or literary allusions, geography of the story, etc.

Some interesting results have been obtained by asking students to work out a dramatization of a story, or of parts of a story. This appeal to imagination and personal contribution is very effective with some students.

Before sketching other possibilities it should be said, perhaps, that the question of how much time ought to be given to one exercise is a matter for those concerned to decide. Among the various committees of the club there should be a program committee to which such questions may be referred for study and recommendation.

The second kind of study I have to suggest is a more detailed examination of the work of an author, his times, his influence. This sort of work would naturally be done in a group of more advanced students. It might be carried on in English, tho' my preference is for the use of the foreign language in spite of the greater effort which this entails.

Instead of dealing with one author, it may be possible, under especially favorable circumstances, to take up the study of some definite period in the literary history of France or Spain. This is a very interesting form of study, but requires, of course, somewhat more zeal for literary knowledge, and the ability to read the language very easily.

One of the most popular subjects with club groups is practice in conversation. This seems at first to be the very easiest form of study. The variety of topics is infinite, the work may be easily grabbed, phrases relating to a given subject may be readily mastered, and thus the sense of progress so encouraging to the student may be secured. We have found, however, that certain things are necessary for satisfactory progress. There should not be too great disparity in experience between the members of a given group. The most important of the requisites is a competent, resourceful leader, who has plenty of patience, and ingenuity enough to make it easy for the members of the group to converse. The next requisite is a well-thought out plan of work, or a good textbook which will furnish lively material of moderate difficulty. We have used for this part of our work at different times the collection of French Anecdotes edited by Giese & Cool, published by D. C. Heath & Co. We have also employed Pattou's "Causeries en France," Walters' "Episodes en action," published by E. P. Dutton & Co., and "Le Soldat américain en France," published by the University of Chicago Press. This little book contains much material which would be useful for the ordinary traveler.

We have also used short comedies, like "La Grammaire" by Labiche, "L'Eté de la Saint-Martin" by Halévy; we have made our own exercises to cover some of the most useful phrases. I feel sure that a book like Bierman & Frank's "Conversational French Reader," Allyn & Bacon, would render service here; the same is true of David's "Chez nous," Henry Holt & Co.; and of many other books perhaps just as worthy of mention as those which I have named. There are sets of cards for conversation games, tho' I must confess that I could not get much interested in those which I have seen; there is a fine set of proverbs in four different languages, English, French, Spanish, German, there being two kinds of cards, one bearing the first half of the proverb, the other the second half. Different ways of using these cards have often seemed to interest our students. This set may be obtained from Brentano's. Quotations may be recited and discussed. French and Spanish cities, manners, costumes, customs, amusements may be studied. Any kind of work done in the foreign language is a conversation study, provided there be something



like general participation in the discussion of the subject. In connection with the regular work of the department there should be available various foreign newspapers and periodicals. Items and articles of current interest may easily be obtained from such sources. Items appearing in the American press may be translated.

The fourth requisite for a successful conversation group is a real desire on the part of the members to learn to express themselves in the other tongue. The tactful leader can foster this desire, but even he can not create it. One of his hardest problems will be, of course, how to make the others do the talking. The art of putting stimulating questions is something of a test of our ability. Occasionally there will be found one or two members who have had special advantages or are specially courageous, and are somewhat inclined to monopolize things. These must be held in check, but not discouraged. They can be made very useful if they have real ability by putting them in charge of groups or of certain subjects. Frequent oral reading, with a good deal of judicious repetition, will help the timid ones to a confidence in themselves and their ability to find the right word. In the program of the social meetings there should always be included something which will encourage the members to speak French or Spanish to each other. Some clubs make a practice of calling the roll and having each member present answer to his name by giving a quotation or a proverb.

I do not believe that we are realizing the advantages to be derived from group study of diction. There are so many splendid selections of poetry which may be used, in the development of the capacity to read interestingly; besides training in pronunciation and self-possession, the cultivation of the love of beautiful literature is certainly worth while; and the memorizing and practice of selections of prose and poetry is a delightful method of rendering the ear and the mind sensitive to the correct and the beautiful. Would it not be possible to form a group, the members of which should be pledged to memorize and recite a definite number of selections chosen under the guidance of the leader? The selections should be explained to the group and read by them before being recited. Some impressions of beauty, and a desire to acquire a more accurate and fluent pronunciation

ought certainly to result from the work of such a group. Those who have the taste for this kind of work benefit largely from it themselves and give a great deal of pleasure to others.

If more time is available, there is nothing which calls forth more salutary effort in connection with the spoken language, nothing which trains the ear more rapidly, than the preparation and presentation of properly selected plays. Here we get a degree of attention, and a quantity of practice which can not easily be obtained in any other way. But it is hard to carry on general club activity simultaneously with the rehearsal of a play, unless each be done by a different group. This constitutes a difficulty where the numbers are not large. But it can be met by doing different work at different times, having thus a season for conversation, a certain season for dramatics, a time for other things.

So far as French at least is concerned, it is not easy to find superior plays which are within the grasp of second and third year students, and adapted to presentation with only the resources which a High School or even a college can command. A fine list of plays is furnished by the catalog of the Alliance Française Library. On page 61 of the "Suggestions and References for Modern Language Teachers" will be found a good list of plays.

Tristan Bernard's "L'Anglais tel qu'on le parle" has been a favorite in this country. "Le Voyage de M. Perrichon" is certainly effective. "La Grammaire" et "La Cigale chez les Fourmis," "La Poudre aux yeux," and "La Lettre chargée," all by Labiche, are very amusing, and not difficult to give. Comedies by Courteline, many "Pièces" published in "L'Illustration" and "Les Annales," "L'Été de la Saint-Martin" by Halévy, "Mlle. de la Seiglière" by Augier and Sandeau, are readily to be procured. There is a natural limit set by the abilities of the actors who can be obtained, and the comparatively small audience which can be attracted by the play in a foreign language, so that the great modern and classic plays are out of the question for most of us. Molière's comedies, however, are very popular with French clubs throughout the country. Where whole plays can not be given, scenes may be selected in such a way as to furnish a good program. And if plays and scenes can not be acted, they can at least be read. Where they may be at all adequately presented, plays arouse great interest among those who take part, and demonstrate

to the public in a very interesting and convincing way the possibilities of progress which may be made without ever leaving our shores. It is worth some sacrifice and some work to obtain this effect with pupils and public.

Other forms of activity will suggest themselves to you, for example, lectures by distinguished foreigners, travel talks, illustrated lectures, social meetings, musical programs, etc. These are all of great value, but they can not be discussed at length in this article, for I must hasten on to speak of two features, which as I have already indicated, may be used in connection with almost any program or social occasion.

It has already been said that the use of games and popular songs will be of great assistance in keeping up the enthusiasm and pleasure which are essential to the life of the Club. In the use of such material, we seem to get closer to the manners, the mind, the soul of the nation which we are studying. But judging by the number of inquiries which I have received, it is difficult for teachers to find suitable games and songs. You will find in Prof. Oliver's "Suggestions and References for Modern Language Teachers," pages 57 and 59, short lists of the material which is available.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the above it may be noted that there are several songs with accompaniment, in David's "Chez nous" (Henry Holt & Co.), and in Talbot's "Le Français et sa Patrie" (Benj. H. Sanborn & Co.), and a few songs scattered in other publications.

\* 1. "Chansons, poésies et jeux français, etc.," by Agnes Godfrey Gay.

2. "Poèmes et chants de France," by Daniels and Travers, D. C. Heath & Co.

3. "Petit Recueil de Chants français," by H. Carter. Large edition with accompaniments, \$1.50; small edition, with just the melody, 50 cents. Oxford University Press.

4. "Sixty Folk-Songs of France," medium voice, edited by Julien Tiersot, Oliver Ditson Co., Boston, Mass.

5. "French Songs," compiled by Max Walter and Anna Ballard. Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York.

6. Bouchor et Tiersot, "Chants populaires pour les écoles." 3 series. Paris, Hachette & Co. No. 1 is now to be obtained from Brentano's, which firm has bought up the stock of the Wm. R. Jenkins Co. No. 2, I am obliged to say, seems to me a highly unsuccessful collection, because there are almost no real French songs in it, their place being usurped, to my mind, by original melodies of no great value by Cecil Hollins. No. 5 contains about 50 songs with music, but in most cases without ac-

Some clubs would find a great deal of pleasure in using Weckerlin's "Bergerettes," delightful little songs of the eighteenth century, published by G. Schirmer, New York; he has also published "Chansons françaises pour les petits Français," and we have drawn upon "Chansons populaires romandes" by Jacques Dalcroze for some very pretty numbers. But we have picked other things up wherever we found something that was especially pleasing, in the "Annales", in other publications, in various collections. Firms such as G. Schirmer of New York, Oliver Ditson Co., of Boston, can furnish much French music and will import anything which may be desired.

With regard to Spanish music the situation is now better than Professor Oliver's bulletin would indicate, for beside the Modern Spanish Lyrics of Dr. E. C. Hills and S. J. Morley, published by Henry Holt & Co., and the Elementary Spanish Reader by Espinosa, Benjamin H. Sanborn & Co., the Spanish Reader by De Vitis, Allyn & Bacon, contains fifteen Spanish songs, some of which are too difficult for class use. However, I have no doubt that the recent vogue of Spanish music will result in some collections being issued, and an inquiry addressed to G. Schirmer might elicit some information. The only collection which has come to my notice is one published in Spain. It has an attractive title: "Lo que cantan los niños. Canciones de cuna, de corro, coplillas, adivinanzas, relaciones, juegos y otras cosas infantiles," by Fernand Llorca, Madrid. Unfortunately, in spite of the title there is not a note of music in this book.

So much for music. Perhaps it will assist some to give a description of a number of common games. First, however, attention should be called to the list given in the bulletin above-mentioned, pages 58 and 59. To this we might add "Jeux français," by Lilian G. Ping, distributed in this country by E. P. Dutton & Co., New

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companiment. Among the American editions this seems to me the best, provided one knows how to get the accompaniments. Of No. 6, we have used the first series for several years. The accompaniments may be obtained by ordering the larger and more expensive book which contains them.

The writer and Professor Arthur E. Heacox, of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music have been working upon a collection of French patriotic and popular songs, putting into this collection some ideas gained as the result of a good deal of investigation. This collection will be published by D. C. Heath & Co., New York.



York. For a much longer series of games than I may now give, I have drawn upon Valaincourt, *Jeux de société*, Paris, Garnier Frères; and Harqueroux & Pelletier, *200 Jeux d'enfants*, Paris, Librairie Larousse. A number of our most useful games we have adapted or invented.

1. A simple and satisfactory pastime may be arranged by having members of the group read aloud some amusing anecdote. The listeners then try to repeat what has been heard, the group leader or the reader explaining idiomatic expressions, and asking questions when necessary. The members of the group may be asked to give orally such anecdotes, and to answer such questions as may be put to them about the little stories.

2. *What is it?* Pin on the back of each player a slip of paper which bears the name of some famous building or object in Paris or elsewhere in France, the name of some city, or of some distinguished man, the name of an animal or of any sort of object. Then the players try by questions and answers to find out what the object is the name of which they are wearing. Naturally, answers need not be too direct.

3. *The Prince of Paris.* This ancient diversion may be made to do real service by assigning to each member of the group a number. Then the leader will repeat something like: "The Prince of Paris has lost his hat (or some other object), and thinks that the one who has taken it is No. . . ." The player thus designated must at once say: "No, sir, it is not I, sir, it is No. . . ." And thus the game continues until someone does not answer. Thus the players are made to say at least something and are given practice in recognizing numbers and phrases. The game is so easy that it may be used very early, and will prove amusing if not played too long. Various changes and additions will occur to the leader. Thus, in accusing one another, the players may say that the person accused has hidden the object in something else; or the form of the speeches may be altered to provide greater difficulty.

4. *The Divided Fable.* Take some rather short fable by La Fontaine, or any short story and copy it upon cards, so that only a sentence or two will be upon a card. Break the sentence in the middle sometimes and continue it on another card. Then start the reading of the story, and have the various members read the

sentence which they hold when the time for it comes. This will prove excellent ear-training. It may be combined with exercises in conversation, and would seem to be a very good way to go over material with which the players are already familiar.

5. *Vocabulary Game.* (a) The players pronounce in turn words beginning with the same initial, and keep it up as long as anyone can furnish words beginning with the letter. Then choose another letter and continue. This may be varied by requiring a definition of the word given.

(b) Another variation of this idea is the old French game called "Le Corbillon." In this game the players tell what they will put in the "corbillon," the little basket, giving a word which ends in "on" to rhyme with "corbillon." It would be easy to extend this idea to other articles as for example, the automobile, which would require words ending in "ile," or "le pâté," requiring words ending in "é," etc.

(c) Another vocabulary game is the old-fashioned spell-down, pronouncing the foreign words, and requiring their spelling or the English equivalent. The same thing may be done with selected idioms, and should prove an agreeable and very useful exercise.

(d) Select a rather long word and invite the players to write down in a given time all the words which they can form using letters found in the chosen word. Exclude proper names and words of less than three letters.

6. *Bill of Fare.* Someone begins by saying: "I am going to dine at the restaurant to-night and I shall order" . . . (naming some dish); another repeats the same formula and adds the name of another dish; and so on until the round of the circle is completed or the list becomes too long. When a person makes a mistake, he should move his chair back from the circle a little and cease playing until a new series is begun. This will be a very good exercise for students of French, provided they are furnished at first a list of the names of French "plats." Otherwise the result will not be of very great value.

7. A similar game is the "Jeu des emplettes," "Buying game." There may be used some phrase such as: "I spent the morning in the stores and I bought . . . (some article)." The next player repeats and adds the name of another article, and so on, as long as the players care to continue.

8. *Geography games.*

(a) French or Spanish cities. Someone gives a description of a city without mentioning its name. The players try to find out by guessing and by questions as to location, etc., which city is meant.

(b) Name some French department or Spanish province. The players must give the name of the capital and mention some characteristic or product of the region.

(c) The leader gives a description of a certain region, the players try to discover what region is being described, point it out on the map, etc.

(d) Write out the names of cities, rivers, departments, etc., but transpose the letters so as to conceal as much as possible the true aspect of the word. The players try to re-establish the letters in their proper order, and describe the object.

9. The same thing may be done with the names of authors or the names of well-known books, plays, etc., or any desired word.

10. *Fruit Basket.* Here is another old friend. The game is less inane, however, when played in a foreign language, with the obligation on the part of the players to rise and speak the name of the fruit they represent, whenever the leader mentions it. Someone will have to prepare a list of the names of fruits, for it seems to be rather difficult to recall them always with sufficient promptitude to sustain the interest in the game. The names assigned to the different players should be frequently changed. I have in my notes the names of 27 fruits and the names of the different parts of the basket.

11. *The Weary Traveler.* The one who plays the part of the traveler passes slowly around the group seated in a circle. He stops in front of a player, and says: "Monsieur, (Madame, Mademoiselle) je suis très fatigué; Voulez-vous me permettre de me reposer ici un instant? (Un peu, quelque temps, avant d'aller plus loin, avant de reprendre mon voyage, pour reprendre haleine, pour me rafraîchir, etc.)" The reply must be: "Non, Monsieur, (Madame, Mademoiselle) je ne peux pas vous permettre de vous reposer ici un instant, (etc.)". The reply must follow exactly the form of the question. In case of hesitation or mistake in the answer, the person making the mistake must yield his seat to the other, and take the part of the traveler.

12. *Proverbs Game.* The group may learn and then repeat proverbs, requiring a forfeit for every mistake.

The leader of a group may pronounce the first part of the proverb, some member of the group the second part. Or the set of proverbs above-mentioned may be used as a game for from four to six players, by dealing both kinds of cards for about 24 proverbs, leaving the rest as a "talon." The player completing the greatest number of pairs wins the game.

13. I shall only mention the game of Authors played in French or Spanish. For this special sets of cards may be obtained for French, and I suppose for Spanish also, tho' I have no direct information about that.

14. If you desire a game in which there is a little more action, try what is called in French "*Le Furet*," "*The Ferret*." For this, form the players in a circle, either standing or seated, with one player standing in the center, and have them hold a cord, the ends of which have been tied after slipping on the cord a rather heavy ring. The players sing the round: "*Il court, il court, le furet*," and pass the ring to each other along the cord. The player in the centre tries to follow the ring. When the leader calls "*Stop*," "*Arrêtez*," the round is interrupted, and the player in the centre touches the hand in which he thinks the ring is hid. If he succeeds in locating the ring, the person who was holding it must take his place, and the game goes on. If he can not locate it in three trials, the song is started once more and he must try again.

15. A still more lively game is "*Colin-Maillard à la française*," French Blindman's Buff. A circle is formed, and a number given to each player. One of the players must be blindfolded and stand in the centre of the ring. He calls two numbers, and the persons designated by these numbers must change places. The "*Blindman*" tries to catch one or the other. If successful, he must guess the identity of the one caught. If he guesses correctly, that player must take his place, be blindfolded, and call the numbers in his turn.

16. A game which we have played about as frequently as any other is: "*Je pense à quelque chose*," "*I am thinking of something*." One player retires from the room, the others select some object; the one who had withdrawn, having been called back, endeavors by his questions to find out what the selected object is,



asking each player in turn. The one who gives the revealing answer must then assume the responsibility of asking the questions.

17. The last game I may mention is another old favorite, which lends itself very well to the impromptu and informal character which the Club meeting may well have on some occasions at least. This game is that of Charades. Some word is selected, the syllables of which may be acted out; a final scene is supposed to represent the whole word. Different groups may prepare different words and thus entertain each other. I shall suggest a half-dozen words from the list of something like 200: Adroit, ador, accommodant, accordéon, boucler, bouffée, etc.

In conclusion, I may say that it seems to me that we teachers of modern languages have a great responsibility for the preservation of cordial and helpful relations between the different countries. The prejudices of the narrowminded, unfounded statements by the thoughtless, unfriendly criticism by those who draw erroneous conclusions from some unfortunate individual experience, deliberate poisoning on the part of some of the currents of good feeling between nations, all these things we must counteract, and if need be, fight against, by taking a large view ourselves, and by presenting to our countrymen, in our classes and outside of them, all that we possibly can of what is friendly and beautiful and noble in the art, institutions, and life of our brothers in other lands. Lectures, readings; conversation, music, games, dramatics, any or all of these may be used to supplement the regular courses and may render great service in arousing and maintaining the enthusiasm which is a vital condition of rapid progress and permanent interest.

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## WHY MY CHILDREN SPEAK SPANISH

*By* MRS. MARGARET HILL BENEDICT

**I**F YOU live in a bilingual country like Porto Rico or in a border region like that along the Rio Grande, there is no particular difficulty about getting a child to speak, read and write well in both languages, although even this is a far greater task than it is ordinarily considered. But when parents who speak two languages come to live in a country where only one is commonly spoken their troubles begin, that is if they wish to have their children speak both languages. In most cases of this sort the second language is either entirely forgotten in a few months or becomes so hopelessly confused in the minds of the children that they are too discouraged and puzzled to take it up again.

A gentleman, himself an educated Mexican, came to the northern part of our country with his American wife and their son, a boy of eleven years. The wife spoke Spanish very well and the boy knew at that time, very little English. Seven years later this gentleman was talking with a Spanish teacher in the city where he was living at that time. He said, "My son will not speak Spanish any more. No amount of threatening or persuasion or promise of reward will make him say a sentence. He seems to hate it." The teacher replied with a question. "What language do you use in the home?" she asked. "Why, English, of course," was the reply, "it seems more natural." "Well then," said the teacher, "how do you expect the child to keep on with anything so difficult as a language with nobody to help him?" How with thousands of people constantly talking English all around him is any child to keep from forgetting even the simplest expressions of a language which he bears only now and then?

Seven years ago, with a little daughter three years old and a tiny baby I left Porto Rico. The older child spoke almost no English although she had been accustomed to hearing that language and understood what was said to her. How was I, among English speaking people, away from the Spanish atmosphere and

the Spanish language, to keep for my daughters this priceless heritage which I felt was theirs by right? Seven years of experience have taught me to answer my own question. My girls understand all that I say to them in Spanish and take pride in answering in that language. The older one is now ten years old and has a better understanding of Spanish grammar than the average high school student after two years study. She reads simple Spanish books and often asks me about the derivation of words. One day I said to her, "Vé al correo a traerme la correspondencia." "Oh! she exclaimed, "Now I see. Correspondence, correspondencia. They are the same." She had never connected the two words before. Little people and ourselves are "half a life asunder" and it is hard for us to realize how slowly we ourselves have learned.

My younger girl read last summer seventy-five pages in a Spanish First Reader and can write simple words from dictation even when she does not understand their meaning. Spanish is a perfectly phonetic language and she knows the sounds of the letters.

The first consideration in teaching a language to a child is one of sentiment pure and simple. The word "amateur" means at the start nothing more than "lover," and by the sublime working of destiny has come to mean "beginner." Where there is no love for a study there can be no beginning. Love, enthusiasm, joy, is the beginning of all progress. If we think of a language as a miserable jargon, if we cannot take the word of wise men and women who assure us that it is beautiful, we are not ready to begin to learn it.

I have found that one of the greatest helps in my work of teaching my children has been the sympathy and approval of friends and relatives. Children, and grown-ups too for that matter, are very sensitive in this matter of a foreign language. An unpleasant laugh, a contemptuous word or even a cold look is enough to discourage a child for days. On the other hand a little applause and sympathy work wonders. The older girls on our street used to take my little girls and coax them to repeat little rhymes in Spanish. These older girls would call a few friends for an audience and gently and tactfully persuade the tots to repeat what I had taught them. "Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat, Where

have you been?" and "One, two, three, four, five, I caught a hare alive," never failed to please and my little ones felt that they had something to give to others just as older children do when they can play or sing.

Another important point is system. Mental labor is not so different after all from sewing or housework. If work is neglected it will pile up. A child should never be hurried or worried, but the work should never be dropped for any length of time.

When we lived in Porto Rico my older girl spoke almost no English. I spoke English to her but she answered in Spanish. When we came to the United States matters were reversed. I began to talk to the child in Spanish. For a short time she answered me in that tongue but as soon as she had American playmates, and American aunts and uncles began to appear she answered me in English. As her Spanish prattle had not troubled me in Porto Rico, so I did not allow myself to be distressed about this English baby talk in our own country. I spoke to her always in Spanish when we were alone and usually in the presence of others. I used to arrange sets of questions for her and teach her the answers. These we repeated every day. I taught her to say, "Good morning" and "Good night," and to ask and answer all the polite and solicitous questions which in Spanish must always be repeated morning and evening.

When this older child was six years old I taught her to read in Spanish during the summer vacation. She learned very well for she could read English in the first reader, but I should have saved her and myself a good deal of unnecessary trouble if I had waited a few months until the English reading was easier for her. Reading is reading and the reading of any language helps a child toward the reading of any other. If they learn first to read the language which they hear most and with which they are most familiar they can learn much more easily the less familiar language. With the younger girl I never attempted any lessons in reading Spanish until she had had thorough drill in English phonics. I then began the Spanish which is much easier because it is phonetic, and she seemed to learn to read it in a day. She always enjoyed those first lessons more than her sister had because she was better prepared for them.

It is a difficult thing for anybody to speak to another in a foreign language when the native language of both is the same.



It is not a question of understanding or of making oneself understood. If you and your son John live in America and hear English all the time and talk English with everybody else, why in the world should you two converse in French or Spanish or Hebrew or anything else? It doesn't seem necessary or reasonable. Difficult as are the other questions in this matter of teaching a foreign language to a child, this is the hardest one of all. The child does not want to seem affected and strange before his friends. His own language seems more intimate and affectionate in the family and more sensible before others. Once in Porto Rico an English woman brought to my school her little son who was at that time eight years old. The child spoke to me in English from the first so that I supposed that he had always spoken it in the home. A few weeks later I happened to mention to the parents that the boy spoke English very well for a child brought up in a Spanish country and both of them were much surprised to know that he spoke it to me at all. They said that although he had always heard it and understood it he had always spoken the other language to them. From that time on they tried to get the boy to speak English to them but he refused and seemed so distressed that they let him speak Spanish for a time. They asked me if I could explain his preference for Spanish and I said that it was clear enough. He had begun to speak at home in Spanish just as every child born in a foreign country will speak first the foreign language if he sees anything of the natives. This beginning established Spanish as the home language for the little fellow and nothing else seemed right. But when he saw me I was a stranger and spoke first to him in English. A precedent was established and in English we went on speaking.

A mother who wishes to speak a foreign language to her children must do more or less acting and must lead the children to play a part more or less unconsciously. In the course of twenty years of teaching Spanish and English I have had many bright pupils. Some did excellent class work, many easily learned to grasp the meaning of spoken or written words, and many enjoyed working along from year to year and gradually increasing their knowledge. But among all the rest a few stand out as simply wonderful, and among these few were two boys of high school age whose talents would have shown in a circus ring. I remember

one, a Cuban, whom I taught from his fourteenth to his eighteenth year. He was bright eyed, handsome, agile as a cat, mischievous and impudent like himself alone. I never could rebuke him because even if I managed to keep a straight face I was inwardly so convulsed with laughter that I dared not say a word. He could mimic in song and speech every Spanish dialect he had ever heard. He seemed to get the particular tone or twang or drawl or impediment of the speech of every man, woman or child that crossed his path. All this he rehearsed at convenient or inconvenient times to delighted audiences in school or church or on the street corner or anywhere he happened to be. English he drank in delightedly in great gulps. He loved the sound of it and the sound of his own voice repeating the strange new words. Before he had been in the United States a year he could help American children pronounce words in the fourth reader and he amazed everybody by the vocabulary he had acquired.

From that experience I learned that acting has a place in the learning and teaching of a language. My talents are in other directions but I have learned at least not to act as if it seemed strange to me to speak to my daughters in the language of another country. If they object as they occasionally must, I argue gently and innocently in Spanish, not in English. If they ask the meaning of some Spanish word in what I have said, I explain in Spanish not in English. Once I said to the smaller one, "Vé arriba a traerme la bolsa de zurcir." "What is 'bolsa de zurcir'?" she asked. "Es el saco donde guardo las medias que tengo que remendar," was the answer. She trotted off immediately and brought the darning-bag.

Last summer was the best that we have ever had together as far as the Spanish is concerned. We were alone in a country place and somehow the girls took to answering often in Spanish. They saw so little of other people. We had lessons from nine to ten in the morning and a neighbor's child was glad to join us. Her mother who was a Porto Rican had died when she was four years old and the child had come north to live with an American aunt. The relatives wanted her to learn Spanish and the child herself was delighted. Once in a while she would remember some word like "grande" or "leche" or "café," but most of it she had or course forgotten. She read in the first reader with my younger

child. After each reading lesson there was a lesson in dicatation and spelling. Then followed an oral exercise in which I asked questions in Spanish sometimes about the lesson just read and sometimes about some familiar subject. The girls answered me in complete sentences.

Toward evening we often played games using only Spanish words and expressions. We played "Pussy wants a corner" and "Blind Man's Buff." These happen to be in Spanish, "Lend me some fire," (*Me da candela?*) and "Blind Hen," (*Gallina Ciega*). The little girls ran and laughed and caught up and repeated delightedly everything that they heard me say. "Ven acá, Gallina, aquí está el maíz, y el arroz, Gallinita, y los tomates. Cuidado Gallina, por aquí va el perro. No tropieces."

A few domestic animals are a great help in such a summer class. I used to talk Spanish to the dog and the cat as seriously as if nobody had ever thought of anything different. I used to say, "Quítate del medio, Buck. Qué majadero eres! Ven acá gatita. ¿Tienes hambre? Llama a tu hijo y ven que aquí está la comida." The animals understood quite as well as if the words had been English and the children soon began to repeat all that I said. The dog is a particularly good helper right here for he is such a sympathetic and enthusiastic listener to anything said in a kind tone that the children watch him and shriek with laughter.

When my girls have learned a few stanzas of some Spanish song or poem, we repeat the lines together, taking turns. One repeats as much or as little as she chooses and another takes it up. This never becomes monotonous because each one may say three words or three lines or whatever she wishes before stopping. Any good selection, perfectly memorized is a treasure house of knowledge to a student young or old. From the one little fable, "El Chivo Afeitado," we have in the course of six months, taken up these points; the difference between "quisicosa" and "rompeca-beza," the name "Juana" as applying to womankind in general, the difference between "demanda" and "demand," the galicismo "remarcable," why the word "moscovita" means Russian, guitar music in barber shops, the situation of Tetuan and our interest in what is happening there today. A grown person with a fair knowledge of the language could take in all this in one lesson but with a child one proceeds slowly. Every point must seem to

come up by accident. A story at bedtime, a conversation by the brook or in the meadow, a chance reference in some school book, any one of these may give the mother her opportunity to explain.

Now a word about grammar. One feels timid about mentioning that subject now-a-days when the teaching of technical grammar has for so long been regarded with disfavor. Still a few solid facts give me courage to make certain statements. I do not believe in teaching the rules of grammar before the mind can grasp them, that is before there is sufficient knowledge of language for the formulating of rules, but the fact remains that anybody who expects to have a thorough knowledge of any language must reduce his ideas to order. Those pupils from high school age on, who learn the language easily and rapidly have in every case either an instinctive grasp of the rules and principles of grammar, or a good knowledge of these based on the study of Latin and other languages.

As for children, even when taught from their babyhood, they lose nearly all that they have "learned" unless they are systematically taught the parts of grammar suited to their years. I know an intelligent young woman who studied German, her parents' native tongue, for seven years, in public school with good teachers. She studied reading and conversation with no grammar. She had a little later two years of Spanish and about as much Latin with thorough drill in grammar. Today she can write more in Spanish than in German. She says helplessly, "I never learned the conjugations." I had a pupil once, a very bright girl in third year high school who had lived from her seventh to her fifteenth year in Mexico. Her parents were educated Americans but they took no pains to teach her Spanish. She went to a Mexican school and read and studied in Spanish with the native children. Surely this would seem to be an ideal way to learn Spanish. And yet that girl came to me for a course in Spanish grammar for she said that her lack of knowledge in that line made her helpless. She could not read anything but the simplest Spanish and could not write correctly in it, or express herself in any but the simplest conversation.

My older girl was nine years old before I had her look into a Spanish grammar. Before that time she had often conjugated verbs and had formed the plurals of nouns and adjectives but she

had learned no technical names for these exercises. From the time when she took those first grammar lessons she began to answer me in Spanish of her own accord without having to be taught each sentence. The summer in which she reached her ninth birthday she did seventy-five pages in a good logical Spanish grammar, writing all the exercises of English into Spanish. She did this easily and enjoyed it, but there I had her stop until the next summer vacation. She had her constant practice in conversation and seemed to realize for the first time that there are rules for forming sentences and that she could apply them. The next summer the grammar lessons were continued but at the subjunctive we stopped. I felt that it was too heavy for her.

She knows that she must say, "¿Qué quiere usted que yo haga?" and not, "Qué quiere usted que yo hago?" but she knows no such words as "subjunctive" and "dependent clauses."

So much for the past. For the future our methods will be little changed. We shall read together such things as the girls can understand without translation, not without explanation. We cannot thoroughly understand our own language without constantly reading the works of good authors, and certainly with a foreign language we must make up for the lack of conversation by the reading of good books.

It is now a little more than twenty years since Americans began to take a new and greater interest in the Spanish language and today that interest is still increasing. We are growing more sane too in our attitude toward the work in hand. We hear less and less about "easy methods" and "short cuts" now-a-days. Still once in a while a would-be learner comes to a teacher and says, "Can't you teach me conversation without grammar?" Yes, we can, when musicians teach piano and violin by ear.

Spanish as a commercial language is more important every day, and with Pío Baroja and Pérez Galdós and Blasco Ibáñez in the land of the living, literary Spanish can only increase the glory that was won for it by Cervantes Saavedra.

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## THE REAL KNOWLEDGE OF A FOREIGN COUNTRY

By L. L. STROEBE

### I. INTRODUCTION

THE war has taught us that the study of modern languages in our colleges and universities has not brought to our students all we hoped for. Many a soldier has found himself in a foreign country, unable to speak the language, in spite of the fact, that he had for several years pursued French or German courses in the high school and the university. Others were able to make themselves understood, as far as the needs of daily life were concerned, perhaps they also had a fair knowledge of the literature, but they knew nothing or had only the most superficial ideas about the history, the geography and the institutions of the foreign country, concerned. And those were, perhaps, men who for years had taken courses in foreign languages and literature at college and university, and had perhaps themselves taught French and German in an American high school. Even before the beginning of the war the whole country realized that the teaching of foreign languages was in need of improvement, and there is no doubt, that, as far as the oral work is concerned, a great deal has been accomplished. But little has been done in our colleges to give the students a knowledge of the foreign country, even to students who were specializing in the language of that country and were to teach it later on. There has been a great deal of talk about the teaching of "Realien," i.e., the geography, history and institutions of the foreign countries in our high schools and lately there have been innumerable little text books giving scraps of information about those subjects for our high school pupils. We are almost inclined to say that the pendulum has swung too far, and at a time when high school pupils ought to spend their time on verb drill and on the acquisition of a simple vocabulary, they are fed with facts which they can not understand about the government and the school system of the foreign country. It is clear that high school pupils are not mature enough for this kind of



work, and a real study of those subjects may better be taken up in college or even in the first year of graduate work. But it seems to me an absolute necessity for a college student who is specializing in French, German, Spanish or any other language to receive at some point in his career, definite instruction in the geography, history, the political institutions, the educational system and the most important features of the social and intellectual activity in the foreign country of his choice. In looking over college and university catalogues we can find some hopeful beginnings in this direction, but only a very small number of institutions consider the subject worthy of a distinct course of study. Quite a number of these subjects are discussed in the courses in literature, as modern literature especially can not be understood without a certain amount of such information, but a separate course is needed, in order to collect and supplement the scattered information which the students have accumulated in different ways during their college course.

There is great possibility of variation in such a course, as it must cover so many different subjects and its unity lies only in the fact that these subjects all pertain to one and the same foreign country. So this paper does not at all mean to dictate the method to be followed in giving such a course, but merely to give suggestions based on the experience of one person in trying to solve the problem. These suggestions as to how to acquire a real knowledge of a foreign country are intended not only for college instructors who conduct such courses, but will be especially useful for teachers and other persons who feel the need of such information for themselves. A large number of such people will be found among the teachers of modern languages in our high schools. Very few of them have had the opportunity of doing this kind of work in college, as very few colleges offer such courses, and those which offer them now have done so only recently. The demands on the professional education of modern language teachers in this country have increased tremendously within the last ten or fifteen years. Not only a speaking knowledge of the foreign idiom is demanded, but sound first hand information about the country itself is one of the prime requirements for effective, successful teaching. A great number of teachers attend summer schools in order to gain more knowledge and it is there especially that they find out that a

few weeks work in summer is not sufficient for their purposes and that they feel the need of more reading and studying during the rest of the year. But they do not have the time nor the necessary knowledge of books and other sources of information to plan out a course of reading for themselves and are therefore dependent on courses planned for their special benefit. Most of them have read a few books about the foreign country in English, for instance the books in the collection "*Our European Neighbours*" edited by W. H. Dawson, are widely known. Some of these, however, are most superficial and misleading, for instance the chapter on French Education in "*French Life in Town and Country*" is most unfair to France, as it is evidently written by a person with very little knowledge of the subject and absolutely no standards of comparison. There is no doubt that the average high school teacher of modern languages needs a guide for the study of the foreign country and it seems the duty of those who have worked in this special line to supply them with such guidance.

As far as German is concerned my suggestions for the choice of material rest on actual teaching experience, as I have conducted courses of this kind for almost ten years with undergraduate and graduate students at Vassar College and at my German summer school.

It seems important to me, that such a course should not be offered too early. In order to profit fully by it, students ought to be able to read the foreign language as rapidly as their own; they ought to be able to express themselves in a simple but clear way, and they must be mature enough to compare the institutions of the foreign country with those of their own country. The latter part of the undergraduate course in college or the first post-graduate year seems to be the time most suited to such work. Such a course offers excellent material for oral and written composition, as the formal part is just as important as the subject matter. We all agree that students need continuous practice in composition, in oral as well as written work, and courses in advanced prose composition have always been required of those specializing in modern languages. The material for these courses, however, is often chosen without system or continuity, ranging from the discussion of a literary question and outlines of the contents of novels and dramas to the description of pictures. Usually very little effort is made, to

connect one theme with another or to employ in the next lesson the words and phrases learned in the preceding one. If, however, the written and oral work centers around definite subjects, systematically built up on a study of "Realien," there is more hope that students will acquire a large vocabulary and fluency in its use. Students are much more interested in their themes if they have the feeling that they are not merely writing an "exercice," but that they are writing about subjects which are connected with each other and which have to do with real life. The interest in the subject matter certainly promotes an interest in the form. After students have looked up the topic for themselves, they feel that it is worth while to write about it or to stand before the class and give the others information about the foreign country which they have gathered and which they feel is valuable and interesting. Standing before the class and giving a talk in the foreign language is an excellent means of practice in the fluent and correct use of the foreign idiom. Emphasis is to be put on a clear and distinct pronunciation. Among the regulations for the Students' Army Training Corps it was suggested that students who are reciting or giving reports in the class room should stand at attention and should speak in a clear and distinct voice, as this is of "military importance." It is certainly not only of military importance, but just as advisable and necessary in any other walk of life, and that regulation should certainly not be forgotten in times of peace.

There are certain general principles which must be considered, if students are to gain definite results from such a course. First of all, the recitation must be conducted in the foreign language, as this course is meant to supplement other language courses. If students after two or three years of high school work and another two or three years of college work, are not able to express themselves in the foreign language in such a way that they can be understood, it shows clearly that their teaching has been very inferior.

The second point of importance is that students must have access to the original sources of information, and they must not study their subject from compilations in the English language. Of course good books written in the English language about the foreign countries have their place and may be read occasionally to supplement other work, but they are certainly not to be used as

regular text books. The choice of books, or to be more correct, the choice of many different chapters in many different books, is a tremendous task for the instructor, and to work out a course where the material is to be culled from so many different sources is a work of several years.

Another important point to be considered is, that the self-activity of the students is to be stimulated as much as possible, a principle which has to be considered in all teaching. This precludes a mere lecture course, but there are many cases where a short and clear introduction of five or ten minutes by the instructor is necessary, in order to enable students to understand the subject or the assignment for the next recitation. The preparation for the class work can be done in different ways by the students and it is well to vary the methods. Often students can be sent to the library to find out for themselves what they can about the subject under discussion; they will thus learn in time where to find general information and where to find more specific details. Very often, however, the subject is complex and difficult and the instructor will have to assign definite reading in definite books, in order to save time and effort on the part of the students.

Such a course can not be well conducted without a liberal supply of books, charts, pictures and other equipment. The greatest help toward a general survey of any of the subjects under consideration is a good encyclopedia and students ought to be trained from the beginning to consult such books first. For French there is the *Grand Dictionnaire universel du vingtième siècle*, by Pierre Larousse, and *La Grande Encyclopédie*, each containing more than twenty-five volumes. The new *Larousse Illustré* in eight volumes is, however, quite sufficient for our purposes. (*Nouveau Larousse Illustré*, Directeur: Claude Augé, Librairie Larousse, Paris). In German there is the *Grosse Konversations-Lexikon* of Brockhaus and that of Meyer, each containing more than twenty volumes. In Spanish, where fewer books are available, an encyclopedia is an absolute necessity. Of the three large ones, *Diccionario Universal de la lengua castellana, ciencias y artes* (D. Nicolas Mario Serrano, Madrid), the *Diccionario Enciclopédico Hispano Americano de Literatura, Ciencias y Artes*, (Barcelona, Montanna y Simon), and the *Enciclopedia Universale Illystrada Europeo-Americano* (Barcelona, José Espase), the latter

is the best for our purposes. Brockhaus and Meyer have also each published smaller editions of their encyclopedias in two and three volumes and in many cases those are sufficient for a general orientation. I have not been able to discover, either in French or in Spanish, any thing as good and as condensed as these short encyclopedias.

Next to these compilations, good guide books in the language of the country they describe are the greatest help to students as reference books. There are several volumes of Baedeker for France and Germany, and one each for Spain and South-America. They all contain valuable introductions about art and architecture and also much historical information. For France the *Guides Joanne* are to be highly recommended. Murray and Ford are good guide books for Spain, but unfortunately there are no Spanish editions of them. Often small local guide books can be procured and they will be found very useful.

Besides large and small encyclopedias and guide books, a great many other books are needed, but the cost of such books need not be charged to the language departments alone, as books on history, government, art, in the foreign language are just as valuable for the other departments concerned. Most of our colleges demand of their students before graduation a reading knowledge of one or two foreign languages, but this requirement becomes an empty form if the departments are not willing to demand of their students that they use books in the foreign language, whenever—as is quite often the case—the best information on the subject has not yet been made accessible in English. The charming French books in the collection "*Les villes d'art célèbres* (H. Laurens, Editeur, Paris) are just as valuable for the departments of art, architecture or history, as they are for the department of French; and the excellent *Monographien zur Geschichte, zur Kunst, und zur Erdkunde Deutschlands* (published by Velhagen and Klasing, Leipzig), are just as important for the respective departments as they are for the department of German.

The underlying principles are the same, whether such a course deals with France, Germany, Spain or any other country, though the distribution of subjects might slightly differ in the different languages. If we have a two or three hour course through the whole year, the first semester might be spent entirely on geography

and history, the word geography being taken in its wider sense and including the relation of physical features to living things, to industry, agriculture, the development of cities, etc. Of the history only an outline, a kind of frame work, can be mastered in such a short time. History and geography are the most important subjects and the study of others will be much more successful if the instructor can rely on a certain amount of information in these two. The second semester might be divided equally between a study of the constitution and government, the administration and the political life of the country in question, its school system and its universities, its art, newspapers, periodicals, daily life. A Spanish course of this kind naturally would have to include a study of the conditions in of the South American republics. This is perhaps too great a mass of material to be mastered in two semesters. Some subjects, however, might be dealt with more superficially than in the case of other foreign countries, as there is little doubt that Spanish America has less to give to American students intellectually than the other foreign countries studied, however important its present or future commercial relations with the United States may be.

Such a course of study naturally is open to the accusation of superficiality. It is impossible to learn in a short three hour course even the history of the foreign country; how can students acquire in this brief time a knowledge of other topics besides history? But such a course is not meant for students and specialists in history, art, political science or any other separate subject. It is merely meant to be a supplementary course for the study of modern philology taken in the broader sense as the term is used in Europe, meaning a study of the language, the literature and the life of a foreign nation.

Such a course can be taught only by an American instructor who has had several years of residence abroad and who knows the foreign country and its people, their history, institutions, ideals, culture, aspirations and national characteristics intimately, sympathetically and from first-hand observation. If the instructor is a native of the foreign country, the same knowledge of, and the same attitude toward American conditions is to be expected of him.

*Vassar College.*

*(To be continued)*



## THE 'INVENTION' OF THE NATURAL METHOD OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

By ERWIN ESCHER

THAT the 'natural method,' which applies object teaching to the study of modern foreign languages, was invented in the United States is an assumption commonly met with. It is probably based on the passage of the 'Report of the Committee of Twelve' dealing with that method,<sup>1</sup> and referring to the books of Heness<sup>2</sup> and Sauveur only, as representing the method. Also the financial success, in America and abroad, of the Berlitz schools, which adhere to the principle of object teaching, with exclusion of the mother tongue, may have contributed to this impression.

A. Rambeau, in reviewing<sup>3</sup> a paper by Kroeh on the natural method,<sup>4</sup> states that the method was 'invented' in 1865 by Gottlieb Heness. Rambeau was at the time engaged in expounding in the United States the principles of the German 'phonetic method.' The sarcasm of his observation was possibly due to his familiarity with analogous systems developed in Germany, which could claim priority; but also the difficulties which he encountered in his attempt to win supporters for the 'new method' as advocated by Viëtor and his friends, may have inclined him to a harsh judgment. Attempts had at that time been made to introduce the natural method in some of the public schools in New England. But even good teachers failed to obtain satisfactory results, and among the general public suspicion against any kind of conversational method was aroused. This, together with the erroneous identification of phonetics with spelling reform, made the progress of the phonetic method difficult.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bulletin of the U. S. Bureau of Education 1899, 1397-98; also D. C. Heath & Co.

<sup>2</sup> Leitfaden für den Unterricht in der Deutschen Sprache, H. Holt; and others.

<sup>3</sup> Neuere Sprachen 2, 549.

<sup>4</sup> In 'Methods of Teaching Modern Languages', D. C. Heath & Co., 1893.

<sup>5</sup> C. H. Grandgent to Viëtor in Neuere Sprachen 1, 498.

G. Heness, the originator of the natural method in America, was not lacking in modesty concerning his own merits. In an introduction to his 'Leitfaden'<sup>6</sup> he states that he simply proposed to apply to foreign languages Pestalozzi's procedure in teaching High German to children in South Germany by using object lessons. He seems to follow Pestalozzi in so far as he starts with the human body rather than with the objects in the class room, and lacks a systematic arrangement in cycles, such as had been worked out in Germany.

Heness came to the United States in 1841. He remembered that in Germany, in a region where the native dialect differed markedly from High German, "the teacher's chief resource is the system of object teaching" according to Pestalozzi. "But Pestalozzi had another important end in view: To train the ear and the organs of speech of his pupils for High German, and to force on them the habit of speaking High German."<sup>7</sup> It occurred to Heness "ten years ago," apparently in 1865, "that English is very nearly related to German, and that this object teaching could be made of service in teaching German, or in fact, any other language." He made a trial with twelve "most intelligent and promising boys from 10 to 14 years of age."

"I had confidently promised that one school year of forty weeks, five days per week, and four hours per day would enable my pupils to speak German fluently. . . . This was in 1866-67." The 'Leitfaden' was conceived in 1868, first printed in 1872, translated into French by L. Sauveur in 1874, reedited in the 2d edition shortly after, (in 1875?) with an introduction giving the principles and the history of Heness' method.<sup>8</sup> The following may help to characterize the method and its author:

"Since the beginning of the race, this natural method has been the one employed universally in teaching children from the mother's lips their own language." The same method is followed by people who travel in foreign countries. The consecutive steps are: objects, pictures, questions and answers.

"There is no longer any doubt that this method is especially adapted for children."<sup>9</sup> . . . "In the natural order, reading and

<sup>6</sup> 4th ed. No date. Introduction apparently written in 1875.

<sup>7</sup> Leitfaden, 4th ed., p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

writing come after speaking, grammar and dictionary after reading and writing."<sup>10</sup>

"The means of instruction" (summarized):

1. Resemblance between German and English words.
2. Context.
3. Pictures, but they are not indispensable.
4. The first reader is the 'Leitfaden,' begun in the seventh week. The teacher reads aloud, the class repeats; later on the class reads without help. Everything to be memorized must be explained, not translated.<sup>11</sup>
5. Questions to force the pupil to speak German.
6. Repetition of question and answer by the class.
7. Commands.
8. "There are hundreds of other expedients. Every good teacher invents them for himself . . ."

The concluding passages of the introduction to the 'Leitfaden' are quite utopian. The excessive amount of time to be devoted to the study of one foreign language excluded the system from ready application in the public schools: Heness' delusion in this respect is curiously similar to Gouin's more than a decade later.<sup>12</sup> Yet Heness succeeded in founding a number of private schools and vacation courses, and his system was much discussed in the United States in the 70's and 80's.

But whatever allowance is made for Heness' independence in applying object lessons to modern language teaching, the priority can not be claimed for him. It seems trite to mention Amos Comenius' *Orbis Pictus* of 1657, or Basedow's French course in the Dessau Philanthropinum, with its object lessons, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The popularity of pictures as a help for learning languages is very great at that time. "On veut vous apprendre huit langues, avec des gravures qui représentent les choses et leur nom au-dessous en huit langues" writes Nicholas Sébastien de Chamfort, toward the end of the century. Also Pestalozzi<sup>13</sup> speaks of the importance of object teaching in the service of modern language instruction.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> Anecdotes taken from George Storme 'Select German Stories.'

<sup>12</sup> Gouin: *The Art of Teaching and Studying Languages*, Longmans.

<sup>13</sup> R. Kron in Vollmoeller's *Jahresbericht* 2, (1891-94), 320-321.

Yet even if we disregard the attempts of the 18th century in this direction, as having fallen into disuse by the middle of the 19th, Heness' priority cannot be maintained. According to R. Kron<sup>14</sup> the first application of object lessons to language teaching was made by Karl Griep, who in 1858 published a booklet containing word lists arranged according to subject matter in cycles, and based on the wall pictures of Wilke.<sup>15</sup> The name 'natural method,'<sup>16</sup> seems to have been revived in Germany first by A. F. Louvier, who published several text books<sup>17</sup> in 1864 and the following years. Being a disciple of Kant he begins with Space, then introduces Time, and finally the twelve categories. His principles are: First, apperception, second, deduction, third, elementary logic. To him apperception is to be a vital experience, not a mere contemplation of pictures.<sup>18</sup> This systematic procedure of Louvier is quite different from Heness', who can hardly have been affected by it, while in Germany Louvier attracted attention and found followers. Heness' attitude toward pictures is however similar to that of Louvier.

Of greater interest yet seems to be the 'natural method' as recommended for the French schools by the minister of public instruction, Victor Duruy, in 1863.<sup>19</sup> Certain passages, if compared with Heness', make the latter's statements almost sound like an echo.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>15</sup> "La Ville et la Campagne": Recueil de mots français avec traduction allemande, adaptés à l'explication des tableaux de M. Wilke. Berlin 1858.

<sup>16</sup> Used by Comenius, and in 1863 by V. Duruy, in France.

<sup>17</sup> Das erste Buch des franzoesischen Unterrichts. Ein Beitrag zur naturgemeassen Erlernung fremder Sprachen, etc. Hamburg. His principles in: "Ueber Naturgemeassheit im fremdsprachlichen Unterricht," 4th ed., Hamburg 1889.

<sup>18</sup> E. V. Sallwuerk: 'Die Geschichte der methodischen Bewegung' in Vollmoeller's Jahresbericht 2, 337. Ch. Schweitzer in 'Méthodologie des Langues vivantes' Paris 1917, quotes M. Hartmann, 'Die Anschauung im neusprachlichen Unterricht' as saying that in 1860 Louvier, teacher at a girls' school in Hamburg, frankly substituted intuition for translation exercises.

<sup>19</sup> Konrad Meier in Dresden, in an article 'Die Entwicklung des neusprachlichen Unterrichts in Frankreich' in *Neuere Sprachen* 6, 221 reprints the passages of the circular from which my quotation is taken. Duruy published it in 'Administration etc.' p. 22 and in 'Circulaires' p. 35 ff., an evidence, according to Meier, of the importance he attached to it. It is curious that Ch. Schweitzer, in 'Méthodologie des Langues vivantes' (1917), does not mention Duruy, in spite of his evident

"Il est nécessaire de leur apprendre aussi ce qu'on n'apprend bien que dans l'enfance, une langue étrangère. . . . Commençons de bonne heure et quand les organes encore flexibles se prêtent aisément à prendre toutes les habitudes; en outre l'exercice fréquemment répété étant nécessaire pour donner cette souplesse aux organes, nous composerons les classes d'un petit nombre d'élèves et nous rapprocherons le plus possible les leçons.

"La méthode à suivre est ce que j'appellerai la méthode naturelle, celle qu'on emploie pour l'enfant dans la famille, celle dont chacun use en pays étranger: peu de grammaire, l'anglais même n'en a pour ainsi dire pas, mais beaucoup d'exercices parlés, parce que la prononciation est la plus grande difficulté des langues vivantes; beaucoup aussi d'exercices écrits sur le tableau noir; des textes préparés avec soin, bien expliqués, d'où l'on fera sortir successivement toutes les règles grammaticales, et qui, appris ensuite par les élèves, leur fourniront les mots nécessaires pour qu'ils puissent composer eux-mêmes d'autres phrases à la leçon suivante.

"J'imagine qu'un certain nombre de phrases aient été apprises: ce sont des anecdotes, un récit. Le professeur, à un jour donné, exige que l'histoire étudiée et sue la semaine ou le mois précédent lui soit racontée; il ne faut plus réciter, il faut parler. A des élèves plus avancés on imposera comme devoir la lecture attentive d'un morceau plus ou moins étendu, selon leur force, et ils seront tenus d'en rendre compte à vive voix, à l'aide des mots qu'ils y auront trouvés. On fera naître ainsi des conversations véritables, et utiles à l'esprit au même temps qu'à la mémoire.

"Pour les devoirs écrits, on ne commencera les thèmes qu'au moment où l'on reconnaîtra que les élèves sont en pleine et assurée possession des déclinaisons, des conjugaisons et d'un vocabulaire déjà étendu. . . . Les curiosités philologiques et grammaticales seront soigneusement évitées. On les retrouvera suffisamment dans les textes expliqués. Plus tard on remplacera les thèmes par des compositions plus ou moins développées, dont les sujets seront empruntés à des lectures faites en classe à haute voix par le professeur.

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desire to show, that the direct method in France was developed independently from the German method, and that it was rather the latter that was indebted to the French.

"Enfin on n'oubliera pas, pour la prononciation, qu'il faut, comme en toute chose d'éducation, aller du simple au composé, de la syllabe au mot. L'enseignement de la prononciation portant sur des faits purement matériels, il importe peu que le sens de la phrase péricule d'abord, que le mot lui-même soit décomposé en ses éléments syllabiques contrairement à la synthèse ou de l'étymologie; l'essentiel est que la sensation spéciale que donne le son d'une syllabe arrive nettement à l'oreille de l'enfant, et que ce son puisse être reproduit par ses jeunes organes. Il sera plus tard exercé à mettre dans les mots l'accent tonique et, dans les phrases, à relever la voix sur les expressions que le sens indique comme les plus importantes."

In conclusion one finds that Heness on the whole did only what had been suggested and executed in Europe before him: Devise a method enabling young pupils to learn a language by intuition and without recourse to the mother tongue. His method lacks thoroughness, and deserves the criticism of the Committee of Twelve that "almost the only evidence of system is the arrangement, in a general way, of the easier discourses and dialogues at the beginning, the more difficult at the end."

Yet he did more: favoured by the peculiar conditions in the United States he created a series of private schools for language teaching, on a paying basis. Only in this respect does he seem to have been more successful than his European predecessors, who had to deal with a more rigid system of schools, where foreign language study had to be fitted into a fairly complete scheme of general education, and where utopian plans providing for a foreign language monopolizing the whole curriculum for a year or more were bound to fail, as did Gouin's analogous endeavours. The private school idea with foreign teachers, but for adult students primarily, was taken up in May 1878 by Berlitz in New York,<sup>20</sup> who transplanted the scheme successfully to Europe, thus contributing to put the American stamp on the natural method.

Heness is among the forerunners of the more rational direct method of language teaching in public schools, that was developed in the 80's and 90's; in England by Sweet; in France by men like Gouin, Bréal, Passy, Schweitzer; in Germany by Viëtor, Kuehn,

<sup>20</sup> A. Pakscher in *Englische Studien*, 21 (1895), 310 ff.



Stengel, Klinghardt, Rambeau, Walter and Doerr; in Scandinavia by Jespersen, Lundell, Western and Palmgren. Heness is not the first to foreshadow their method; and it is not he, but Victor Duruy, who first comes nearest to a precise statement of the conditions under which language teaching may be done most successfully.

*Illinois College*  
*Jacksonville.*

## Notes and News

Arkansas, Fannie A. Baker,  
Fort Smith High School  
California, I. C. Hatch, Poly-  
technic High School,  
San Francisco  
Iowa, Chas. E. Young, State  
University, Iowa City  
Kansas, Mabel Duncan, Senior  
High School, Arkansas City  
Louisiana, L. C. Durel, Tulane  
University  
Maine, Roy M. Peterson, Uni-  
versity of Maine, Orono  
Nebraska, Abba Willard Bowen,  
Peru State Normal School

New York, Charles H. Holz-  
warth, West High, Rochester  
Ohio, E. B. de Sauzé, Director  
of Modern Languages, Clevel-  
land  
Oklahoma, Faith Goss, Central  
High School, Tulsa  
Pennsylvania, Isabelle Bronk,  
Swarthmore College,  
Swarthmore  
South Dakota, Caroline Dean,  
Yankton  
Washington, Grace I. Liddell,  
Lincoln High School, Tacoma  
Wisconsin, B. Q. Morgan, Uni-  
versity of Wisconsin, Madison

### M. L. T. ANNUAL MEETING CANCELLED

Notice is hereby given that owing to the proximity of the date of the M. L. A. Meeting at Columbus, Ohio, to that of the usual annual meeting of the Association of Modern Language Teachers of the Central West and South, the Executive Council has voted to cancel this year's meeting.

C. H. HANDSCHIN,  
*Secretary, M.L.T.*

### IN RE TRANSLATION

Of the discussion of methods there is no end, and properly so, for only thus is truth sifted out and progress made. While all will admit that the direct method has accomplished much in the way of injecting life and variety into foreign language teaching and study, it is evident that some teachers do not accept all its tenets without a struggle. An article by Professor John Hill in "Hispania" for November, 1919, entitled, "Translation vs. Oral Practice: the Students' Attitude," shows that those on whom we practise our theories feel that there is good in both forms of exercise. A sentence in Professor Hill's article has inspired this contribution. "Here (in desiring both translation and oral practice) we get a saneness of viewpoint that is wholly commendable, and

one that may well give pause to the headlong direct method advocates, if with them the desires of the students count for anything." In the "Modern Language Journal" for the same month an article by Francis M. Froelicher criticizes the program of French studies for elementary and secondary pupils drawn up by members of the staff of the University of Chicago High School because it overemphasizes speaking, a form of oral practice.

These two articles are significant to readers of the "Journal" who recall an article, "In Defense of Translation," written by Professor B. Q. Morgan for the issue for April, 1917. This article was a development of a brief note in the "Bulletin" of Wisconsin for January, 1917, in which Professor Morgan stated seven points in favor of translation, and called upon advocates of the direct method to define "minimum" in their often used phrase, "translation reduced to a minimum."

A reply to this note was made by Dr. Carl A. Krause in the "Bulletin" for April, 1917. Dr. Krause denounces translation as a regular class exercise, says that "minimum" does not need to be defined, and concludes: "I do not grant Morgan the correctness of any of his seven theses, but protest them, each and all, as unproved assumptions."

A categorical statement that a man's views are false does not prove anything except a difference of opinion. As Professor Morgan amplified and defended his points, in spite of the fact that his critic's views may be expressed elsewhere in his writings, the burden of disproof of these particular points rested on Dr. Krause and still rests on him. It is apparent that the champions of "minimum," whatever this term may signify, have not, to quote Professor Morgan again, "nearly cut the throat of translation." At least, it is a corpse that declines to stay in its grave.

C. E. Y.

The Department of Romance Languages of the State University of Iowa is sending invitations to the French and Spanish teachers of the state to a conference to be held in Iowa City March 26, 27. The program will be in two parts, one general or social and the other professional. The first part will contain such numbers as addresses by a noted Frenchman, illustrated lectures on France in peace and war and the hospitality of the faculty clubs. The second part will be composed of presentations and discussions of various teaching problems.

Director Collins of the Middlebury College (Vt.) summer sessions writes: "President Poincaré of the French Republic has granted two medals in recognition of the distinctive work of the French School of the Summer Session of Middlebury College.

One of these medals is to be conferred upon the student accomplishing the best work in French Literature and the other will be given for the best work in Commercial and Industrial Geography of France and her Colonies. The details of the plan under which the awards will be made will be worked out by Professor H. P. Williamson de Visme, Dean of the French School, and Dr. G. de la Jarrie, representative of the French Government, will be submitted for the approval of President Thomas, and announced later by me."

The French Ministry of Public Instruction had conferred on Professor Casimir D. Zdanowicz of Randolph Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Va. the "Palme académique," and made him an "Officier d'académie" in appreciation of services rendered as Professor of English at the "Centre de Préparation" at Metz last year, when he was teaching under the auspices of the "Foyers du Soldat". This is an indication of the appreciation of French authorities for the work done by American teachers over there.

Several Arkansas schools are finding the French Club a useful adjunct to class room work. Henderson Brown College has a fine French Club, full of enthusiasm. The High Schools of Van Buren and Fort Smith report flourishing organizations. At Fort Smith, Le Cercle Français numbers sixty members. The Club boasts of several talented members, one of whom writes original poems in French, another writes original short stories, illustrated Dialogues, short French plays, sometimes a debate in French.—All keep up the interest and give practical training in actual use of the language. Current events form an important feature of the programs and short stories of the war such are found in *La France héroïque*.

#### FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS OF WISCONSIN

Interesting figures on the language situation in various schools and colleges have already appeared in the Journal, but so far no one has attempted the study of an entire state, including large and small schools. The following figures have been compiled from the reports of high school principals dated October 1916 and 1919 respectively. No guarantee can be given of the accuracy of the figures in detail, but it is not believed that minor errors, if any have occurred, can invalidate the general conclusions which the figures compel. The seriousness of the situation becomes still more apparent when the language enrollment is related to the total school enrollment—a feature which has hitherto largely been overlooked in similar comparisons.

The study includes 305 public high schools of the state, inspected and accredited by university men. In the year 1916 the

language distribution was: German only, 139; Latin and German, 103; no language, 47; scattering, 17. In the fall of 1919: Latin only 77; Latin and French, 53; scattering, 43; no language, 135. X  
The total student enrollment of these schools was 45,773 in 1916, 52,098 in 1919, a gain of 14 percent.

The total foreign language enrollment for the two years was 16,472 and 12,500 respectively, an absolute drop of 24 percent. But as we have seen, the total number of pupils increased 14 percent; hence the language enrollment for 1919, to keep pace with the growth of the schools, should have been 18,700. Thus there is a relative loss of 33 percent in foreign language study since 1916. It will be of interest to analyze these figures still further.

We may distinguish five groups of schools with respect to the language situation. In the first place, there are the schools which offered no language in 1916 and offer none now. These are all small schools. Second, there are 33 schools in which the language enrollment has increased both absolutely and relatively; about 16 percent of the total number of schools. Third, no less than 89 high schools have dropped foreign language since 1916, an aggregate loss of 1,746 pupils. These were however largely small schools, totalling 5,398 pupils in 1916, 5,959 in 1919. Fourth, 21 schools which increased their absolute enrollment in foreign language (5 had the same number of pupils in the two years, and in one case the figure was not given) showed a relative loss; these schools had a total enrollment of 4,788 and 6,034, a language enrollment of 1,826 and 1,935. Finally, 116 schools registered an absolute drop in language pupils, from 11,483 in 1916 to 8,082 in 1919. This group includes nearly all the large high schools in the state, with total enrollments of 26,527 and 29,816 in the two years. If we add the pupils in the last three groups of schools, we get a total of 36,713 and 41,809; in each year this total represents 80 percent of the total for the state. The total language enrollment in these schools dropped from 15,055 to 10,016, 33.5 percent. But the relative drop, in view of the increase in total pupils, is 41.6 percent. In other words, 72.5 percent of the public high schools in Wisconsin, enrolling 80 percent of our high school youth, are teaching less than three-fifths of the foreign language that they taught three years ago.

Educators uniformly interpret these figures substantially as follows: Wisconsin is a largely German state, and where one modern language was to be taught, as was the case in very many of our high schools, that language would naturally be German. Now that German has been thrown out (only 21 high schools are teaching German this year), Latin has increased, Spanish has been introduced, and French has leaped to the fore; but the total increases in those subjects fall far short of making up the losses in German. Nor do most observers believe that French and Spanish,

in a state like Wisconsin, can ever take the place that German formerly occupied. The result is a severe blow to the study of foreign language as such.

#### GERMAN GRADUALLY RECOVERING IN COLLEGES

The following figures, as collected for the first semester of the current year, show a healthy growth in the study of German in institutions belonging to the Association of American Universities. Figures for Harvard include Radcliffe College, as the teaching there is done by the Harvard staff. The total absolute increase over 1918 is 32 percent.

	Full teaching positions	Total hours instruc- tion	Beginners this term	Graduate majors	Total students	Total 1918 2d quarter
California.....	6½	68	143	15	373	315
Chicago.....	8	80	84	8	201	95
Cornell.....	4	52	53	3	251	101
Harvard.....	10	157	542	2	833	512
Illinois.....	6	58	96	1	300	200
Indiana.....	2	23	24	0	69	59
Iowa.....	2	36	71	1	229	144
Johns Hopkins..	4	27	11	4	58	64
Kansas.....	3½	46	62	3	135	121
Michigan.....	6	82	103	1	553	285
Minnesota.....	8	99	149	8	571	313
Missouri.....	2	28	70	1	112	55
Nebraska.....	1½	16	56	0	124	37
Northwestern...	3½	39	59	0	270	72
Ohio State.....	4	50	79	0	208	88
Pennsylvania...	9	114	18	5	882	915
Princeton.....	3	45	20	1	192	97
Stanford.....	5	60	92	3	254	121
Virginia.....	1	12	47	0	91	.....
Wisconsin.....	6½	80	69	11	415	264
Yale.....	5	66	69	3	365	200
					6,436	4,858

The M.L.A. of Southern California will resume the publication of its Modern Language Bulletin. Carleton Ames Wheeler, Supervisor of Modern Languages of Los Angeles will be the editor and he will be assisted by A. B. Forster of Hollywood High School.

Señor V. Blasco Ibáñez lectured on the evening of Jan. 31 before the pupils and teachers of the Los Angeles schools under the auspices of the local chapter of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish.

Four committees of teachers in the Los Angeles schools are at work examining new texts in French and Spanish preparatory to



making up the lists for 1920-21. These committees are headed by the Supervisor of Modern Languages and by Misses Emma L. Simpson, Alice M. Hindson, Louisa W. Hutchison, and Mr. Geo. W. H. Shield.

A list of some 19 grammars, 17 readers, 17 "classics," and 11 other books (phonetic readers, verb tables, song collections, etc.) is to be examined for French. For Spanish 9 grammars, 16 readers, 10 "classics," and 2 others are proposed for consideration. Each committee is to meet five times at intervals of a week, and will study also the titles of the existing approved list with the aim of determining which of these are to be retained. Such a procedure should insure satisfactory results.

Dr. John C. Ransmeier of Tulane has left Louisiana as a result of the State law which forbids the teaching of German in our State. It is hoped that the Legislature will permit at its next meeting in May, the teaching of German, in our Universities at least. Miss Noelle Hart, State Chairman of the Modern Language Section of the State Teachers Association has left the State and is now teaching French at the University of Texas.

Romance languages are in great demand but the supply of teachers is inadequate, due to the fact that salaries in Louisiana seem to be the lowest paid. Tulane University has decided to recognize a fourth unit in French thereby putting that language on the same basis as the classical languages. Newcomb college is to extend its Spanish Department greatly. Plans are on foot to offer full four year courses in French and Spanish in all New Orleans High Schools. A Group of Romance language teachers is being formed by the New Orleans teachers.

Financial conditions have produced a third postponement of the Annual meeting of the Louisiana State Teachers Association and so Modern Language teachers will miss the yearly gathering which has been productive of much good.

The language situation is unfavorable, even in French and Spanish because of large registration and no adequate teachers available at the salaries being offered. In Tulane, with two hundred taking Freshman French, there are no students in the training courses for teachers of that subject.

*Hispania* for February publishes an announcement by the Hispanic American Relations committee of the University of California of the arrangements that have been made with the Chilean government for the establishment of several exchange professorships with the United States. As many as four professors may go from us at a given time, in which case there is to be a representative each of a university, of a technical school, of secondary schools, and of elementary schools. The Chilean government has

provided money for paying the teachers who come north and the delegates from us are to be paid by their respective institutions. Appointees must speak Spanish. The Chilean school year runs from March to December. The appointees for 1920 are Dr. Chas. E. Chapman, Associate Professor of Spanish-American history, University of California and E. M. Gregory, teacher of Spanish in the Polytechnic High School, San Francisco. The letter is signed by the chairman and the secretary of the committee, C. E. Chapman and H. I. Priestley, both of the University of California.

In the same number we read that new associate editors of *Hispania* were elected at the Christmas meeting of the A.A.T.S., as follows: Professors Onis of Columbia and Schulz of South California, Dr. Coester of Stanford, Messrs. Mercado of the Commercial High School, Brooklyn, and Donlan of the High School of Commerce, Boston. Mr. Mercado takes the place of Mr. P. B. Burnet and Mr. Donlan of Mr. Joel Hatheway, both of whom had resigned.

The President of the Association, Mr. L. A. Wilkins, announced in his address that arrangements had been made with the University of Porto Rico for a vacation school of Spanish, July 5-Aug. 13, 1920 at Rio Piedras, which place is said to have an excellent summer climate, and that the Costa Rican government proposes to make similar arrangements in San José if encouraged to do so. The expense of a summer in Costa Rica is estimated at \$500 as a generous allowance. Persons interested in the Porto Rican school should communicate with the Bureau of Insular Affairs at Washington.

Several changes have occurred in the modern language Faculty of the University of Maine. Dr. J. B. Segall, who spent last year in Washington and Europe as a representative of the Food Administration, has returned as Professor of French. Dr. R. R. Drummond, formerly Assistant Professor of German, has been promoted to a professorship in that language. New instructors in Spanish are W. I. Crowley and Miss Alta I. Carswell. The department of Spanish has the largest registration among the languages while French is a close second. Instruction in German, which was suspended during the war, has been resumed with a satisfactory enrollment.

A correspondent writes from Texas:

I have been particularly interested in your "editorial" in the January number about the quality of school work—comforted at little also. I had felt that the condition here (a very aggravated one) was due largely to the class of pupils naturally found in such a school as ours, a private school for boys. It would seem not

entirely so. Moreover, I can assure your correspondent that beginning pupils are not the only ones who cause trouble. Seniors are showing as little mental energy, or ability, here this year as the lower classmen. Similar to the report of your quoted correspondent, we have not only "linguistic morons," but mathematical, scientific, and historical specimens also in great number.

Certainly in our case the condition is not due to overcrowded classes. All my colleagues whom I have consulted have expressed themselves with a note of discouragement. One thoughtful teacher suggests as a reason the ever increasing distractions of one kind or another in the home life of the pupils. Another sees the condition as the inevitable result of the present tendency to "make things easy" for the pupils. My idea is that the schools are being filled up with the kind of material that formerly went to work after discovering in the grades that they were not fitted for an education. Now they are persuaded to go to high school—and to college. And I suppose the colleges could make a similar complaint—that many are trying to do college work who do not have college ability. If my information is not faulty, our State University lost about 10% of its enrollment at the end of the fall term through failures—and without a doubt it is much better off, unless there has been a considerable enrollment of similar quality since Christmas. Our idea that anyone who can be dragged into school can be given an education is absurd. Some have been so successfully inoculated against an education (in the commonly accepted sense) that no amount of exposure would ever appreciably weaken their constitutional resistance.

We have in effect here a plan of biweekly examinations. A student failing in a subject on one of these tests, in order to stay in the class, must pass an examination on the same material within a week and a half. Presumably he has studied by himself or has been tutored before making the second trial. In the period between September and December I gave 259 pupil tests to 71 pupils. Nearly 30% of the 259 resulted in failures. Over 60% of the 71 failed on one or more tests. On second trial somewhat less than 25% passed, and nearly 33% made lower grades than they had made the first time! Why? I am sure only one reason occurs to me—the "moral fibre" of a considerable percentage of our pupil enrollment is not fibre at all—it is adipose tissue.

T. A. F.

The American Association of Teachers of Spanish has accepted the invitation of the Chicago Chapter to hold its next annual meeting in that city late in December 1920. The exact date and further details will be announced later.

The Bulletin of High Points of the New York High Schools for December tells of the excellent work undertaken by the French

department of the Morris High School in organizing the task of collecting garments for the children of the devastated regions of the north of France. Nine large cases of garments and toys, used and new, were gathered and shipped with the co-operation of the French Mission.

This periodical announces also that the Union Française of the Institut Français aux Etats-Unis is offering medals for excellence in French to students in high schools of the city, holders of which will have free entry to the Museum of French Art, 599 Fifth Ave., and to all lectures given by the Institut.

The Bulletin's account of a talk by Miss Davis of the Metropolitan Museum on the materials to be found in the Museum that would be of service in teaching the life and customs of France and Spain, accompanied by an exhibit of representative slides, is suggestive of what may be done in other cities that have museums of art.

It announces, too, the formation of an Association of French Teachers of New York City, gives lists of students and teachers in Cuba, Costa Rica, and Buenos Aires who would be glad to exchange letters with American pupils, and mentions the traveling exhibits of French and Spanish material now being prepared under the auspices of the French Teachers Association and the N. Y. Chapter of the Association of Teachers of Spanish.

The regular meeting of the Chicago Society of Romance Teachers took place at the Maison Française of the University of Chicago, Jan. 31. President De Salvio of Northwestern presided and introduced the speaker, Professor E. H. Wilkins of the University of Chicago, who presented the claims of Italian to the interest and attention of American teachers and students of language. The speaker maintained that in view of Italy's evident and valuable contributions to the world's achievement and culture, in the past and in the present, the language and literature of that country should have a larger place in our program of studies. This Society in now in its fourth year, and, in conjunction with the recently formed Chapter of the Association of Spanish Teachers, brings the teachers of Romance languages in the city in closer relation than in the past.

The New York Times of Jan. 31 announced the appointment to the Gebhard Professorship of German in Columbia University of Robert Herndon Fife of Wesleyan University, in succession to the late Calvin Thomas. Professor Fife did his undergraduate work at the University of Virginia, his graduate work at Goettingen and Leipsic, and taught at Western Reserve and the University of Virginia before going to Wesleyan. Readers of the

Journal will recall that he was one of the strong advocates of the formation of the National Federation of Modern Language Teachers, which came into being last year. He has been President of the New England M.L.A., and is chairman of the Connecticut State Board of Charities.

A more careful analysis of the fragmentary statistics in the January issue of the Journal would seem to indicate that the registration in modern foreign languages is about holding its own. For ten high schools the registration in 1914 was 9,591; in 1919, 11,537—an absolute gain of 1,946. For eight higher institutions the registration was 11,606 in 1917; in 1919, 14,430—an absolute gain of 2,824. The percentage of gain is about 23% for the schools from which we have reports, and something over 24% for the other institutions. If an estimate of 20% normal increase in the growth of High School registration and of 30% in the growth of the registration in higher institutions be approximately correct, the language classes have about held their own on the basis of the Journal's returns. However, it is clear that these are but fragmentary.

At the University of Chicago the registration in modern foreign languages was 884 for the Winter Quarter of 1917, and is 1,028 for the Winter Quarter of 1920, or an increase of less than 20%.

The paper of Professor T. L. Kelley of Teachers' College before the recent N. Y. State M.L.A. seems to indicate that experiments with pre-determination tests have not up to the present yielded very convincing results, as it is not clear whether the tests have done more than throw light on the general intelligence of the pupil, rather than on specific ability in learning languages.

The following summary of another paper given at the same meeting furnishes food for thought. Many of the speaker's remarks have a very familiar sound. He is evidently one of those to whom the word "reorganize" has a certain magic quality, as it seemed to have to many persons in high administrative positions of all sorts during the war. Those of us who have been frequenting modern language class rooms would diagnose the difficulties somewhat differently, and would say that to adopt the principles which he advocates and to proceed to act on them generally would be one of the most difficult things in the teaching world and would lead to poorer results than we get now. It is doubtful if the general public or we language teachers—at any rate those amongst us who are most vocal in demanding new things—realize how lacking in the necessary equipment for carrying out any such program are too many of our teachers of modern foreign languages, and how the situation grows daily more acute under present circumstances. The case of the young teacher giving instruction by the

direct method in a foreign language after only a few months of study, and using all her verbs in the infinitive, is extreme, but it is more distressing than amusing. It is much harder for American teachers to get satisfactory training for teaching modern foreign languages than for any other subject. Such training demands more time and money. It would seem that it is only reasonable for school boards to recognize this in some substantial way.

But it is time to yield the floor to Dean T. M. Balliet of New York University, who, according to our correspondent, spoke about as follows:

Dean Balliet assured us that French is not a hard language to speak since even the feeble-minded of France speak French. Why then should not our pupils learn to speak it? The motive of language study should not be mental discipline. The value of anything is determined by what it does for those who like it. We should not train our pupils to the end of reading the classical literature of the foreign nation, for they don't read our own classic literature. The vocational aim should receive greater emphasis. We should get the everyday language. The importance of a knowledge of French and German for professional men was emphasized. Few pupils should take up French and German and by far fewer Latin. We should sift out the poor students after a few weeks. It is important to bear in mind that the average pupil doesn't have the same sort of a mind as the professor who plans the course. Courses and schools should be reorganized to fit all kinds of minds, to give everyone a chance. For all who intend to enter professions or sciences there should be a six years modern language course. The direct method is the only practical method; we should teach only enough grammar to enable the pupil to read and speak. During the first year the pupil's ear should be trained by hearing the language constantly but he should not be required to answer in the foreign language himself, for psychology teaches us that the auditory sense center controls the speech center, which makes it necessary to develop the auditory center first. Let us get fluency before grammatical correctness. The latter comes with practice. The teacher inhibits fluency by constant correction. The value of language instruction lies in the use one makes of it. Too many have wasted their time because they never make any use of the language they studied. Children should get culture by reading the masterpieces of ancient and modern literature in English translation.

The Alliance Française of Cincinnati is offering membership cards to pupils from the high schools of the city and vicinity who attain the highest averages (at least ninety per cent.) in their classes for the complete course. The following pupils have been awarded these cards for 1919-20:



Cincinnati; Hughes, Gaylord Merriman; Woodward, A. E. Ernest; Walnut Hills, Miss Emma Freericks; Madisonville H. S., Richard Crosset; Norward H. S., Gordon Hattersley. Other Schools: Wyoming, Herbert Lape; University School, Lucille Yungblut; College Preparatory, Marian Hayward; Sacred Heart Academy, Melva Walburg; Covington H. S., Edna Miller.

The Modern Language Press of Milwaukee announces two French "table games": a *Jeu de Vocabulaire* and a *Jeu de Verbes*, intended for clubs and conversation groups.

Vincente Blasco-Ibáñez spoke before the San Francisco Chapter of the Association of Teachers of Spanish at the Public Library on Feb. 7th. He repudiated the implication in the phrase often heard that "Spanish is of some use as a commercial language" and pointed out the many excellent contributions of Spaniards to world literature. He also maintained that Spain is not merely a territory of Western Europe, but that the Spanish spirit unites all the Spanish-speaking countries.

The French department in the Oakland (Cal.) High School is endeavoring to carry over language interests into practical activities. Members of the classes visit poor French families and take needed food and clothing to them. The school is supporting four orphans in France, and has raised money for this purpose by giving a French entertainment, including a "cabaret dance."

The officers of the Association Française of San Francisco are E. J. Dupuy, Girls' High School, president; Mrs. Belle Bickford, Oakland High School, secretary.

A year or so ago the legislature of Nebraska passed the "Mockett law," providing that no foreign language may be taught below the ninth grades. This of course excludes even Latin from junior high schools, until the last year. Strong pressure is being brought to bear upon the constitutional convention now in session, to achieve the incorporation of this measure in the new constitution.

Another evidence of the present-day distrust of any living tongue but "American" is the fact that in a majority of Nebraska high schools Latin is the only foreign language now offered. In Omaha and Lincoln, however, the French and Spanish departments are flourishing in the various high schools. French has the greater number as yet; but in February, 1920, the Lincoln registration in beginning Spanish equalled that in beginning French; and Lincoln notes a steadily increasing demand for Spanish.

Teachers' salaries in Nebraska will average 25% higher next year than at present. Administrative boards, from the university down to the rural school, are voting substantial increases. Lincoln

citizens have just ratified at the polls the board's proposal to add \$400.00 to the yearly salary of every teacher—effective at once. Action of this sort will help to fill the six or seven hundred school rooms vacant at present.

An interesting result of the new system of teaching languages introduced into the Cleveland schools last year is the considerable lessening of the percentage of failures. It was reduced from as high as thirty-five per cent to as low as three or four per cent, in spite of the fact that during that time the popularity of French and Spanish brought into the classes more students and quite a few of less high intellectual average. This is due, the teachers say, to the oral drill which enables the student to visualize more vividly and to master more readily. Another contributing feature is that the fundamental principles of the language studied have been taken more slowly and one at a time; as long as one week is spent on one main point of grammar in order to achieve complete mastery of it before proceeding to the next point. Teachers found also that results improved with the interest that the student took in France, Spain and South America through an exchange of correspondence with French, Spanish or South American students. These results have just been measured from a series of standardized tests that were given from the office of the director of foreign languages to all the modern language classes.

Various exhibits showing the importance and the value, cultural and practical, of modern languages are going to be shown to the visitors at the N. E. A. convention to be held in Cleveland at the end of February. There will be classes to demonstrate an efficient method of teaching French and Spanish and the feasibility of eliminating English from all modern language classes.

The Journal has received a communication from the National Security League announcing its support of the movement for increased pay for teachers as a part of its "Square Deal" platform of the League. This important question is being widely agitated just now. It is to be sincerely hoped that what seems to be a favorable attitude on the part of the general public will not be unproductive of results. However we have epidemics of interest in good causes, and too often no better results than are found in the wake of most epidemics.

A member of the editorial board writes: "I'm trying for more Notes and News but it is hard to scratch them up. Every one wants them but no one will send them in!" If we were to place a profound saying under each caption in the Journal after the manner of a novel of the Romantic period, the last sentence of this

quotation would long remain under the caption that heads this department. The managing editor was quite bowled over recently by the receipt of two unsolicited offers from loyal friends to take on the duties of correspondents from two important states, and rejoiced at the thought of soon seeing his flag aglow with all its forty-eight stars. Who knows what next week's mail may bring in?

Among forthcoming articles are: Fulminations of a College Professor, by S. M. Waxman; Good and Bad Reasons for Studying Modern Languages, by the late Calvin Thomas; Results of Correspondence with French Pupils, by Wilhelmina Mohr; The New French University by Elizabeth Wallace; Collecting Data on Modern Language Teaching, by John Van Horne; The Real Knowledge of a Foreign Country, by L. L. Stroebe (*continued*); The Boston authorized List of Modern Language Text Books by Joel Hatheway.

We learn that Professor E. C. Hills of Indiana University has recently received the honor of being made a corresponding member of the Royal Spanish Academy.

## Reviews

*Curso Práctico de Español para Principiantes.* By G. CHERUBINI.  
The John C. Winston Company. The Winston Modern  
Language Series, XXXII+269 pp.

*Preface.* The author announces definite principles, summarized as follows: 1. Only the fundamentals of grammar are given. 2. To avoid abrupt transitions enough material is supplied to keep the students on each important grammatical point for one full week. 3. Dialogue form lends itself to oral drill. 4. Topics and vocabularies consist of conversational words. 5. Grammar is taught inductively. These principles are the same as those used in a companion volume, *Cours Pratique de Français*, by Dr. E. B. de Sauzé. The material was actually tested in the Cleveland schools before it was printed. Such a test should be invaluable and ought to be applied to every grammar before it is published. In a Foreword the author explains how the lessons should be taught; this Foreword should be carefully studied.

*Introduction.* The rules for pronunciation contain brief directions for the position of the organs of speech in the formation of the various sounds. Not much account is taken of exceptions or niceties; technical phonetic terminology is wisely not used without explanations. The sound of *ch* in the Scotch "loch" will probably be unfamiliar. The representation of consonantal sounds before the several vowels (section 4) is good, although the reviewer would put the vowels in alphabetical order. In syllabification (p. xxx) a treatment of *s* would be helpful.

In considering the thirty lessons that form the body of the book, it must be remembered that a full week (or five recitation days) is to be devoted to each lesson. Thus ample time is allowed for the practice so necessary in teaching by the direct method. So far as seems compatible with good results, English is eliminated. Each lesson contains a single grammatical principle, or two or three related principles, and also some additional matter, such as the tense of a verb, an idiom, etc. Each lesson begins with a *lectura* which illustrates the principles involved in the subject matter of the lesson. This is followed by the *gramática*, written in Spanish. Then come the *ejercicios*, usually three in each lesson, and the *vocabulario*. Each of these divisions deserves some comment.

*Lectura.* The reading lessons treat topics of every day life, and contain useful vocabularies. They also illustrate the grammatical rules of the lesson, usually adequately. Occasionally, there are insufficient examples of important principles; thus, on page 132, lines 19 to 23, are found two unconvincing examples of the future of probability; yet the reading lesson is long enough to contain half a dozen good examples. In all compositions artificially built around a given topic or given rules, it is hard to produce natural Spanish. On the whole, these specimens are quite usable, but there are matters of detail which should be revised and improved. On pages 14 and 28, the subject pronoun *él* is too prominent; page 57, line 24, *pues que* does not seem as appropriate as *puesto que* or *como*; page 63, lines 4, 5, *le* and *lo* are direct objects referring to the same person in the same sentence; page 80, line 17, *ino que no me baño!* is obscure; page 149, lines 16-19, the same persons are addressed formally and informally in one sentence. In these and other instances, a revision would improve this reading material, which is a very important and valuable feature of the book. It should be noted that great familiarity with conversational Spanish is essential for teaching these lessons well. Many idiomatic phrases must be explained with little or no help from the vocabulary.

*Grammática.* The grammatical rules are written in Spanish. Usually examples precede rules, but this order is not infrequently inverted, especially toward the end of the book (cf. page 113, rule IX and page 147, rule I). Sometimes no examples are given. Many will take issue with the author on the matter of writing rules in Spanish. A great burden of explanation is thrown upon the teacher. The reviewer is inclined to sympathize with Mr. Cherubini's idea, for the reason that a maximum of Spanish in the class room is advisable. In any case, the rules as they stand should be materially improved. A number of instances of artificial Spanish, of inaccurate statements, and of obscurity have been noticed. To give some examples: page 35, rule III, no allowance is made for *ti*; page 41, rule III, the mention of the personal pronoun without the word *disjunctive* is confusing; page 94, rule IV, *que* is an unfortunate choice as an illustration of the preposition before the infinitive; page 112, rule III, the statement is as true of the third person singular as it is of the third plural; page 47, rule III, the plural forms of *mejor* and *peor* should be given; page 51, rule I, both examples are of *o* verbs. The use of the perfect tense before lesson 20 does not always agree with the correct rule for its use in that lesson. Occasionally English is admitted in explaining difficult idioms such as the English auxiliary *do*. If English is allowed at all, it would be serviceable in numerous places where not used.

*Ejercicios.* In nearly all the lessons the exercises are of three kinds—Spanish questions to be answered in written Spanish, sentences with blanks to be filled in, and English sentences to be translated. There are very few variations from these three types. The Spanish questions deal with the subject matter of the *lectura*. It is perhaps impossible to make such questions seem always natural. On the whole, Mr. Cherubini has composed a very serviceable set of queries. In order to answer them students must know the *lectura* well. Questions to be answered orally are left to the teacher, as they should be.

An excellent feature is furnished in the sentences which contain blanks. This is the best executed part of the book. In nearly every case the ability to fill these blanks implies the understanding of a principle.

The English sentences are only fairly connected in sense, and are somewhat complicated. If translation from Spanish to English is unfortunate in its results, what are the advantages of translation from English to Spanish? Valuable training is possible in translation from English to Spanish and vice versa, but in neither case can it be said to fit in with the direct method or to create a Spanish atmosphere. The English sentences could be simplified by a thorough revision and thereby improved.

*Miscellanies.* The maps are reproduced with place names in English. Some errors are to be noticed in the pictures. It is misleading to suggest that the *Escorial* is in Madrid. In the picture entitled *Sevilla—La Giralda*, the Giralda is in the background, while it is the *Torre del Oro* which is in the foreground. The book contains several songs with music. Each page of the book has its number written out. On pages 200 and above, the form *doscienta* is given, apparently in a mistaken effort to bring about agreement with *página*. There is an adequate appendix on numerals and verbs. The Spanish-English vocabulary does not contain all words; numerous omissions, probably intentional, have been remarked of words in the anecdotes and in the grammatical explanations. In the book there are some twenty misprints or oversights, mostly unimportant.

The author is to be congratulated for putting into separate lessons the preterite and imperfect tenses and the future and conditional tenses.

Mr. Cherubini's book is written chiefly for High School students. The reviewer does not recommend its use in colleges, unless considerable time can be devoted to each lesson. The author has definite pedagogical principles, carefully worked out in actual teaching. He has the courage to eliminate material which he considers unfavorable to the direct method. In practical use in the class room this material will appear to better advantage



than it does in print. The reviewer believes that to insure accuracy in a second edition, the grammatical rules should be partly rewritten, and some of the reading material and exercises, especially the English sentences, be revised.

JOHN VAN HORNE

*University of Illinois.*

*Histoire de France. Cours Élémentaire.* Par Ernest Lavisse de l'Académie Française. D. C. Heath & Co., 1919. VI+247 pp.

Not every historian has the versatility to edit a monumental history of his country and at the same time write a popular textbook for children. M. Ernest Lavisse has accomplished this difficult task. His great work, *l'Histoire de France depuis les origines jusqu'à la Révolution*, 18 vols., 1901-1911), is admired by scholars for its scientific accuracy and lucidity of style. This same accuracy and lucidity of style is found in his *Cours Élémentaire* (A. Colin, Paris), the first book in history used in the French primary schools at the present time, and of which this American text is a reproduction. The great success in France of the *Cours Élémentaire* can be largely explained by the fact that M. Lavisse is as great a student of pedagogy as he is of history—witness his three instructive books on pedagogy,<sup>1</sup> and his position as Head of the École normale. If we bear in mind the additional fact, expressed in one form or another by various biographers, that "M. Lavisse is very fond of young people," no further explanation is needed. The book in its original form has already been used in this country, and in its new form it should find a ready welcome.

The American reproduction of the *Cours Élémentaire* presents an attractive appearance, with clear and pleasing type, and illustrations of an unusually interesting nature, which add much to the general atmosphere which fills the book.

The text (not including the vocabulary) consists of 196 pages, divided into 33 chapters. Each chapter contains a few illustrations, a brief running commentary on contemporary history, a *résumé* and a *questionnaire*. Chapters VIII and XXIII contain, in addition, a full-page map. The edition has two other maps, each covering two complete pages, printed on the inside of the front and back covers of the book. This procedure gives a large-sized map, but a small section of the central portion is drawn into the binding and cannot therefore be seen without difficulty.

The subject matter in the book is admirably adapted to American pupils, for while the political side of history is frequently touched upon, the main portion of the text deals with the history of French civilization. A valuable feature of the illustrations lies

<sup>1</sup> *Questions d'enseignement national* (Paris, 1885); *Études et étudiants* (Paris, 1890); *A propos de nos écoles*. (Paris, 1895).

in the close connection between them and the reading matter; often the details of the pictures serve as a subject for discussion. Of course, only a bird's-eye view of French history can be given. Continuity in the recital is maintained to a certain extent by the summaries, which treat of intervening and contemporary history. The résumé at the end of each chapter emphasizes the important features.

If used for conversational purposes, the questionnaires, which were prepared for French children, are too difficult for elementary students, to say nothing of the continual use of the Past Absolute tense, which most teachers prefer to avoid. They might possibly be used in advanced classes to help in the practice of writing, but even this may be questioned. However, the language used in the text is well fitted for conversational use.

The vocabulary, with the possible exception of the proper names, is done carefully and well, following the modern usage in text-making which emphasizes completeness. The question of consistency in the treatment of the proper names, however, may be raised. The English equivalents of such words as *Amérique*, *François*, *Henri*, *Marguerite*, *Philippe-Auguste*, etc., are given, while the equivalents of *Arcole*, *Christophe Colomb*, *Clotilde*, *Hugues*, *Indo-Chine*, *Roncevaux*, *Sainte-Hélène*, etc., are omitted. *Auvergne*, *(Le) Mans*, *Sedan*, are named and located, but *Carcassonne*, *Champagne*, *Lille*, *Poitiers*, *Reims*, and others are omitted. In the matter of verbs, the maker of the vocabulary wisely assumes that the pupil should be familiar with the forms of the regular verbs, and omits such forms in the vocabulary. With equally good judgment, he gives the full forms of the irregular verbs just as they are found in the text.

As a whole, the editing of the text is well done, and this little *Histoire de France* is a valuable addition to our list of beginning texts for colleges and High Schools.

D. H. CARNAHAN.

*University of Illinois.*

*Contes du Dimanche* de "l'Écho de Paris." A series of pamphlets, edited by A. Kenngot and Léon Duflos. Modern Language Press, Milwaukee, Wis.

The first story, *Le Premier Avion* (32 pp.) by René Bazin, is not of such high merit as to deserve special treatment. Seldom has a French writer of renown attached his name to anything more insignificant. Here is its substance: The inhabitants of a French town hear the roaring of an approaching enemy aeroplane. Having discovered an old rifle that was hidden in the town-hall, they want to shoot down the avion, but are unable to find a single soul courageous enough to undertake the job. Being

cowards, they are also tyrants: they impose the task on the priest whom they rouse from his bed. Happily for the latter, after half a night spent waiting for the aeroplane to come nearer, it was discovered that the noise did not come from an aeroplane at all but from passing trains. How wonderful!

The story is provided with many "modern improvements": interpretation, in French, of a selected vocabulary, questionnaires, vocabulary exercises and exercises in grammar.

1. The editors want evidently 100% French, not only in class-room but also in home work, since they try to explain in French even the most special words (*genêtère*, *râle*, *grève*, etc.), yet they do not explain a great number of rather hard words (*presbytère*, *entretien*, *craquelé*, *épicerie*). How are the students going to know these if they are not supposed to use a dictionary?

2. The explanations are given in very concise style, bringing in new words, often harder than those which are being explained, accompanied in their turn by new explanations, which, however, do not always render the task of the student easier. Here are a few examples: *Duveté*, *duveteux*, ce qui a beaucoup de duvet (plume légère qui garnit le dessous du corps des oiseaux); espèce de coton qui vient sur certains fruits, par exemple: duvet de la pêche. *Tablier*: pièce d'étoffe ou de cuir (peau tannée de certains animaux dont on fabrique des souliers, des gants, etc.) qu'on met devant soi pour préserver ses vêtements.

Would it not be better pedagogy simply to translate such words? On the other hand, the usefulness of such explanations is proportionate to their simplicity. If the formulas used by editors and teachers are not to be different from those given by "Le Petit Larousse Illustré," then why not put that book into the hands of the students? They would then not be given such inaccurate statements as: *fleuve*, grande rivière; *forge*, grand bloc de fer; la corne de la lune, le croissant de la lune; *notifiant l'arrêt*, faisant croire que sa décision était prise dès le commencement; nor such things as: *perdrix*, oiseau de chasse; *râle*, oiseau à *jambes* longues.

3. If a ready made questionnaire is justifiable at all, the questions should be put in colloquial language, designed to bring forth colloquial answers. The editors evidently do not agree with this. The numerous questions of the booklet have no resemblance to what a conversational sentence should be, and often call for answers that cannot be given without the student's memorizing the text. For instance: à quoi l'auteur compare-t-il l'effet de cette poussée? The answer cannot be other than: l'auteur compare l'effet de cette poussée à ce qui arrive le long des fleuves côtiers, sur les grèves de sable et de vase craquelée, lorsque le flot, à l'embouchure, est tout à coup barré par la marée montante. Anything less than this would make the answer incomplete.

And then, ought not the students to have the questions put to them in the most perfect French possible? The following examples show that the editors have not attached to this the importance it deserves: *Le curé paraît-il plutôt enthousiaste ou plutôt résigné? D'après quel choix étaient-ils groupés?* (The text has: *Tous, groupés selon l'âge.*) *Où pensait-on que l'avion se dirigeât?* etc.

4. In the vocabulary exercises the editors simply write a series of words and ask the student to find synonyms or antonyms for them, without thinking that he has often no means of finding them and that some of them have none. What, for example, are the synonyms of *au-delà*, *surprendre*, *la corne*, *tout son monde*, *le voisinage*, etc.? They must have equivalents, but certainly not synonyms.

5. A new feature among the exercises is answers to questions that are to be formed by students: *Non, Monsieur, ce n'était pas le plus faible, tout au contraire, c'était le plus fort des hommes de Puyberne; non, Monsieur, en réalité il n'en avait pas l'habitude du tout*, etc. But perhaps this device will please some teachers who like novelties.

6. Some of the grammar exercises are very good, but they are swamped in a mass of others of doubtful utility, and lack system in presentation.

It is to be hoped that in the forthcoming issues the editors will select the texts more critically and will exercise better judgment in the preparation of the explanatory material.

M. P.

*University of Michigan.*

*Nouveau Cours Français.* By ANDRÉ C. FONTAINE. Ginn and Co. Revised Edition. 1919.

This widely known work is greatly improved by a thorough revision. It has been expanded from 272 pages to 349. The chief fault of the original edition was too great condensation, which has been remedied by the introduction of a great many exercises of varied kinds, by a more extended presentation of the grammar material and by enlarging the vocabularies. Other new features are the addition of the phonetic symbols, an excellent choice of six memory passages and a reference list of verbs followed by *de*, *à*, or the direct infinitive. The book has eleven illustrations, a double page map of France, and a double page plan of Paris.

The originality of the first edition is retained, for the book stands apart from the general run of such works by reason of a certain Gallic flavor which gives it great vividness and interest. It is not, first of all, a grammar but is designed as a general utility book, giving as it does grammar and texts to be used as the basis

for oral work. The book is divided into fifty lessons and provides material suitable for one year's work in college classes or two in high schools. It is a book more suited for use with pupils who have attained a reasonable degree of maturity of mind than for use with extremely young students.

The presentation of the lessons is a very happy compromise between the direct method and the conventional grammar method lending itself to use by either method the teacher prefers. For those who wish to use the direct method, there are numerous questions in French covering points of grammar as well as the subject matter of the texts; varied exercises in filling blanks for teaching articles of proper gender, partitives, prepositions, *il est* and *c'est*, possessives, demonstratives, interrogatives, and the like. The exercises for the relatives are particularly good. Occasionally one meets a stretch of blanks to be filled that impresses one as rather a Chinese puzzle, but this is rare and these exercises are generally successful.

The headings, titles, and, increasingly as the book advances, the directions and explanations, except the more complicated, are in French. This is a good quality, except that occasionally the French is a trifle scrappy when a few words of that language are introduced in the midst of a great deal of English, as for example (p. 60), "Le Futur Antérieur est employé; 1. Like the English future perfect . . ." (p. 193) "Le verbe donner is used idiomatically . . .," "Le verbe jouer may be used . . ."

Of the conventional English sentences to be translated there are generous paragraphs in each lesson, as well as a group of review sentences following Lesson X, recapitulatory exercises on the first twenty lessons, and another group after Lesson XXXV.

To mention the features that give the book its distinctively French character, one may signalize the following. 1. The texts, treating of such subjects as *la Maison, la Journée, le Dîner, le Gouvernement de la France*, five texts on *l'Histoire de la France*, one each on *la France industrielle, l'Armée et la Marine françaises, l'Instruction en France, Notre Ami le Français*. The latter is a charming little original essay worthy of rank as a literary bit of distinction. 2. Memory passages, including *La Marseillaise, Cent Ans Après* of A. Lemoyne, *L'Exilé* of Chateaubriand, the first twenty-three lines of *L'Expiation*, and the noble *ordre du jour* given by Marshal Pétain to the French armies after the armistice. 3. Quotations and aphorisms used in conversation. Beginning with Lesson XVI the author introduces such expressions as "Revenons à nos moutons," "Ou sont les neiges d'antan?" "Rodrigue, as-tu du coeur?" "Vous êtes orfèvre, M. Josse," "Etre la mouche du coche," "Avocat, passons au déluge," explains their use and tells from what literary work they are taken. This

is another feature that cannot fail to give pupils an insight into the soul of the language and a real sympathy with French civilization. 4. The discussion of idioms, and idiomatic distinctions between words of similar meaning. There are ten pages of idioms following Lesson L, and throughout the text we find differentiated such words as *laisser* and *quitter*; *devoir* and *falloir*; *aller*, *partir*, *sortir* and *s'en aller*; *battre*, *se battre* and *combattre*. We are sorry to see no explanation of the difference between *car* and *parce que*. In passing we are glad to note that the author brings to the pupils' attention that "Eh bien" is not "Oh well." Another point which it is pleasing to see treated is the pronunciation of words like *tennis*, *tramway*, *lunch*, *sandwich*, etc.

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